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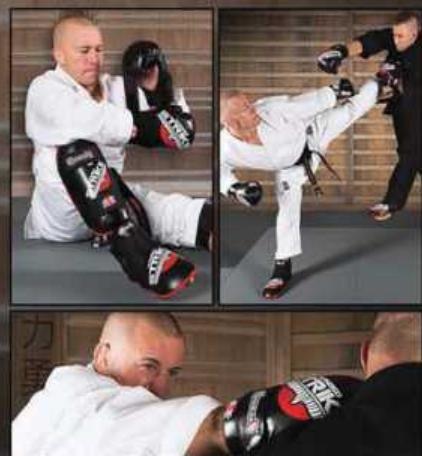
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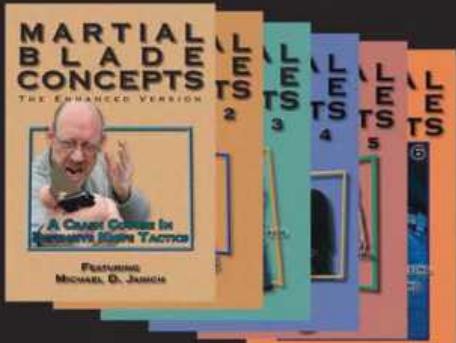
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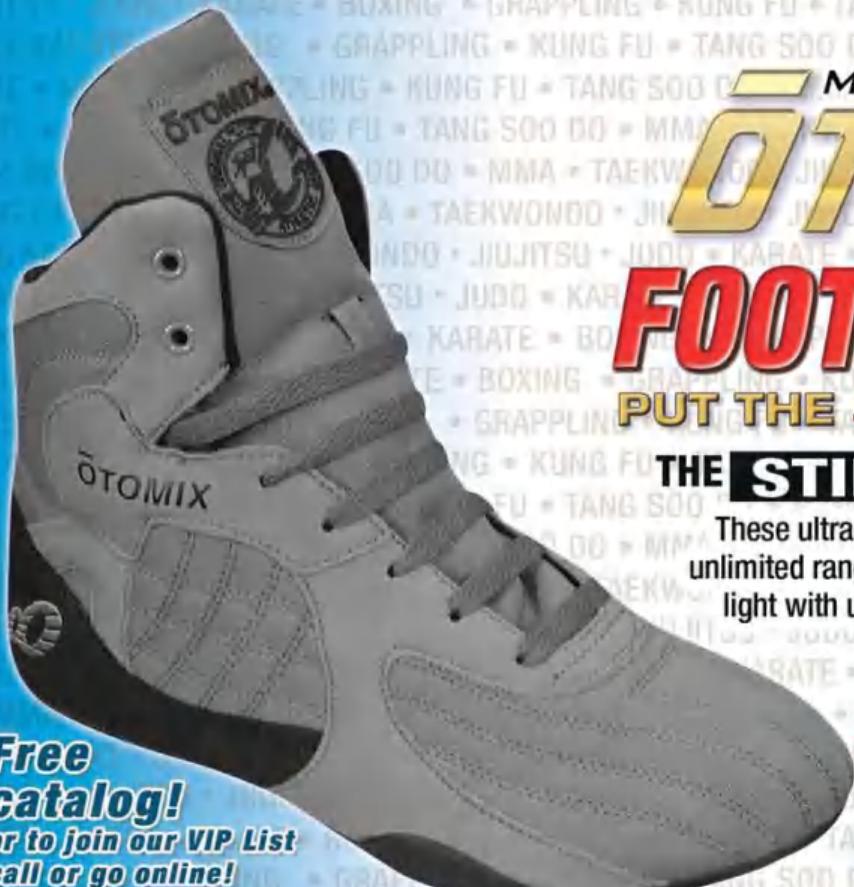
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# INSPIRATIONAL

**B**y the time you read this, 72-year-old Ron Van Cief will have competed — for the second time in two months — as a blue belt in a Brazilian *jiu-jitsu* tournament. No doubt many of you remember Van Cief. He trained under Peter Urban, Moses Powell, Frank Ruiz, Leung Ting and others. In 1971 he founded Chinese *goju*. In the ensuing years, he competed in more than 900 events, often bringing home medals and trophies.

And then in 1994, Van Cief elected to test his skills in the UFC. Some four minutes into his match with Royce Gracie, the Brazilian managed a rear-naked choke, and Van Cief started tapping. Some detractors criticized Chinese *goju*, saying it was an incomplete art. Others criticized the man, saying he didn't belong in MMA. A few noted the age difference: Van Cief was 51, and Gracie was 28.

More important than any of their potshots was the way Van Cief, a former Marine, dealt with defeat. He immediately set out to learn the skills that had bested him. It spoke volumes about the kind of man and martial artist he is.

"Since the UFC 4, I have been mentored by Renzo Gracie, Ken Shamrock, Dan Severn, Howard Niego, Levi LaLonde and various members of the BJJ community," Van Cief said. "I started training with Joe Moreira 10 years ago. My training with Relson Gracie started five years ago."

Van Cief had found a new calling. He now spends most of his training hours rolling on a mat. For the past four years, that's been under Ronn Shiraki, a representative of Relson Gracie Jiu-Jitsu in Honolulu. He hopes to eventually assist with the teaching there.

At the same time, the *Black Belt* Hall of Famer's sights are still set on the tournament scene. "I'm planning to compete more in the near future," said Van Cief, who won a silver medal at his first BJJ event. "My goal is to compete in each rank division — purple belt, brown belt and, in 2020, black belt. I will compete until my body gives out."

## Why all the passion?

For part of the answer, you have to look at Van Cief. He's competitive to the core. Why else would he, at age 60, enter the Henry Cho All American Open? "I won first place in sparring and forms," he said. "It was great to 'retire' a winner."

Obviously, Van Cief didn't retire. His fire was restoked by BJJ, a pursuit in which he can go all-out and not abuse his body. "Having competed for over 50 years in karate, kung fu and full contact, I have had numerous injuries," he said. "My body can no longer take the concussion of the strikes and kicks. In contrast, BJJ is the perfect workout modality for training at advanced ages. I believe it is the safest and most practical training in existence. It can be done forever."

His comments got me thinking. Whether you're talking about boxing, kickboxing, kung fu, *taekwondo* or karate, sparring involves contact, and that can take a toll on older bodies. Judo competition, with its emphasis on high-impact throws, also can be tough to endure as you age. That leaves senior martial artists who love person-to-person contests with few options.

In BJJ matches, there is no striking, and hard throws are few and far between. Almost all the action takes place on the mat, where it's about strategy, technique and often endurance and tenacity — things Van Cief has in abundance.

In analyzing Ron Van Cief's martial makeover, attitude is just as important as art. When he switched to BJJ, he swapped his 10<sup>th</sup>-degree red belt for a white belt and worked his way up from there. Few martial arts masters I know have the Zen mind, beginner's mind that's needed to do that.

For Van Cief, starting over was apparently part of the fun. "I will never quit challenging myself to be the best I can be," he said. "I'm having a great time on my martial arts journey."

We should all be so lucky when we're in our 70s. 

— Robert W. Young  
Editor-in-Chief



# BLACK BELT

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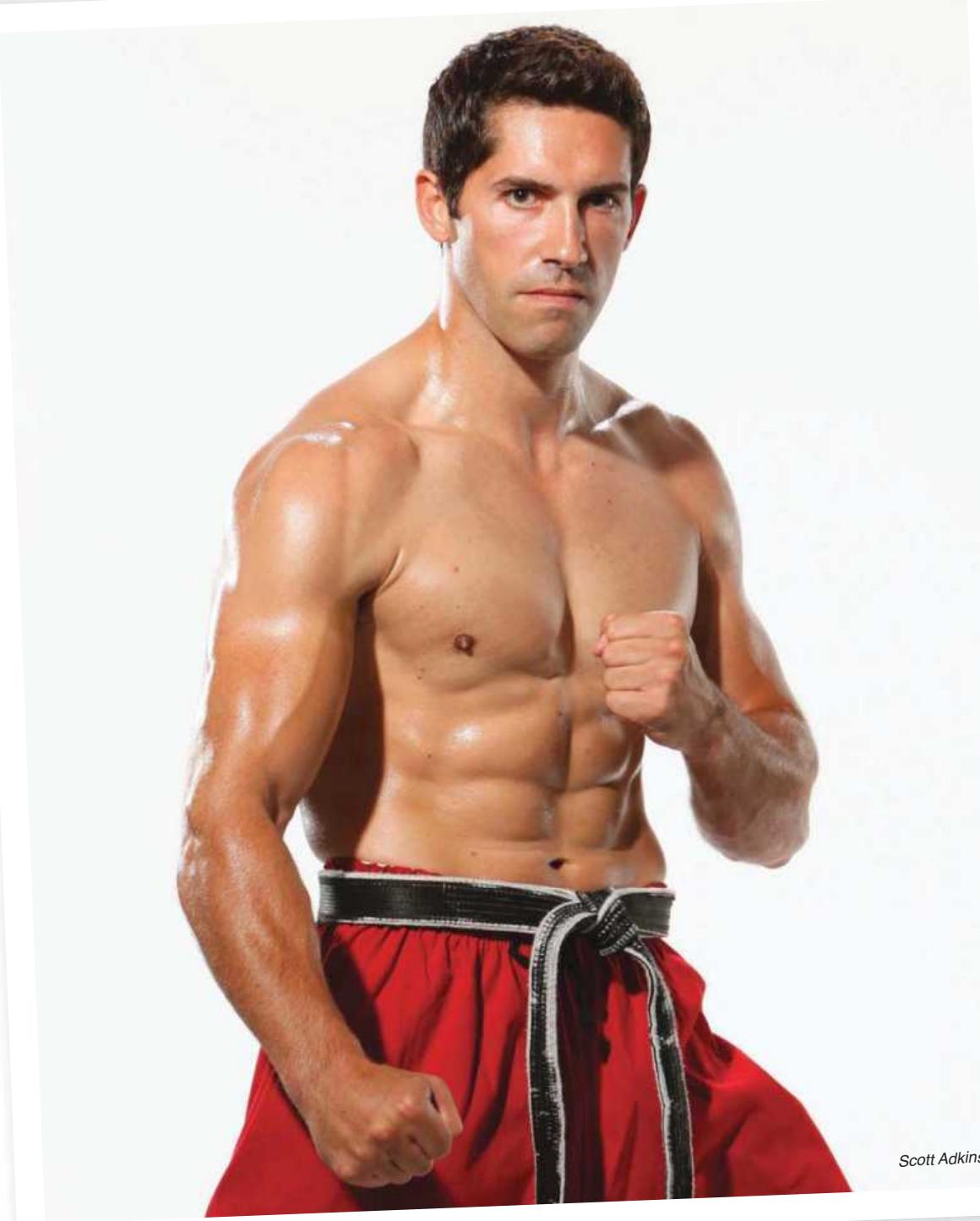
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# TIME'S

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Scott Adkins

Photo by Robert Reiff

# MARTIAL ARTS MOVIE NEWS

• *Mask*, a documentary about Tapout's Charles "Mask" Lewis Jr., has been released. Directed by Bobby Razak, it features never-before-seen footage of Lewis, who began by selling Tapout clothing from the back of his van and eventually built the company into a multimillion-dollar brand. Lewis was killed by a drunk driver on March 11, 2009.



"*Mask*, my life's work, is a film about believing in yourself and making a difference in the world," Razak said. "It's difficult to imagine MMA being as popular as it is today without Mask's steadfast dedication to our sport. The ripples from Mask's life can be felt throughout the MMA community and beyond, and I hope my film inspires people from all walks of life to follow their dreams." [masklewis.com](http://masklewis.com)

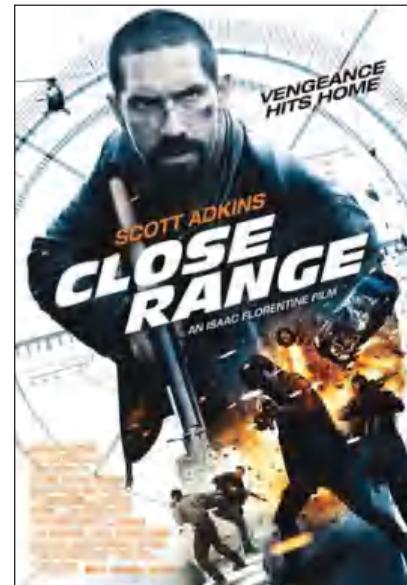


• Sammo Hung has signed to star in *Shanghai Dragons*. He will be aided by other icons of the martial arts, including Dennis Brown, Cynthia Rothrock, Douglas Wong and Sung Jin Su. More well-known martial artists are expected to come on board in the near future. The filming will take place in China.

• The latest film to feature martial artist Scott Adkins is *Close Range*. Directed by Isaac Florentine, it's currently available for purchase on iTunes. It debuted in select theaters on December 11, 2015. The Blu-ray and DVD release is scheduled for January 5, 2016.

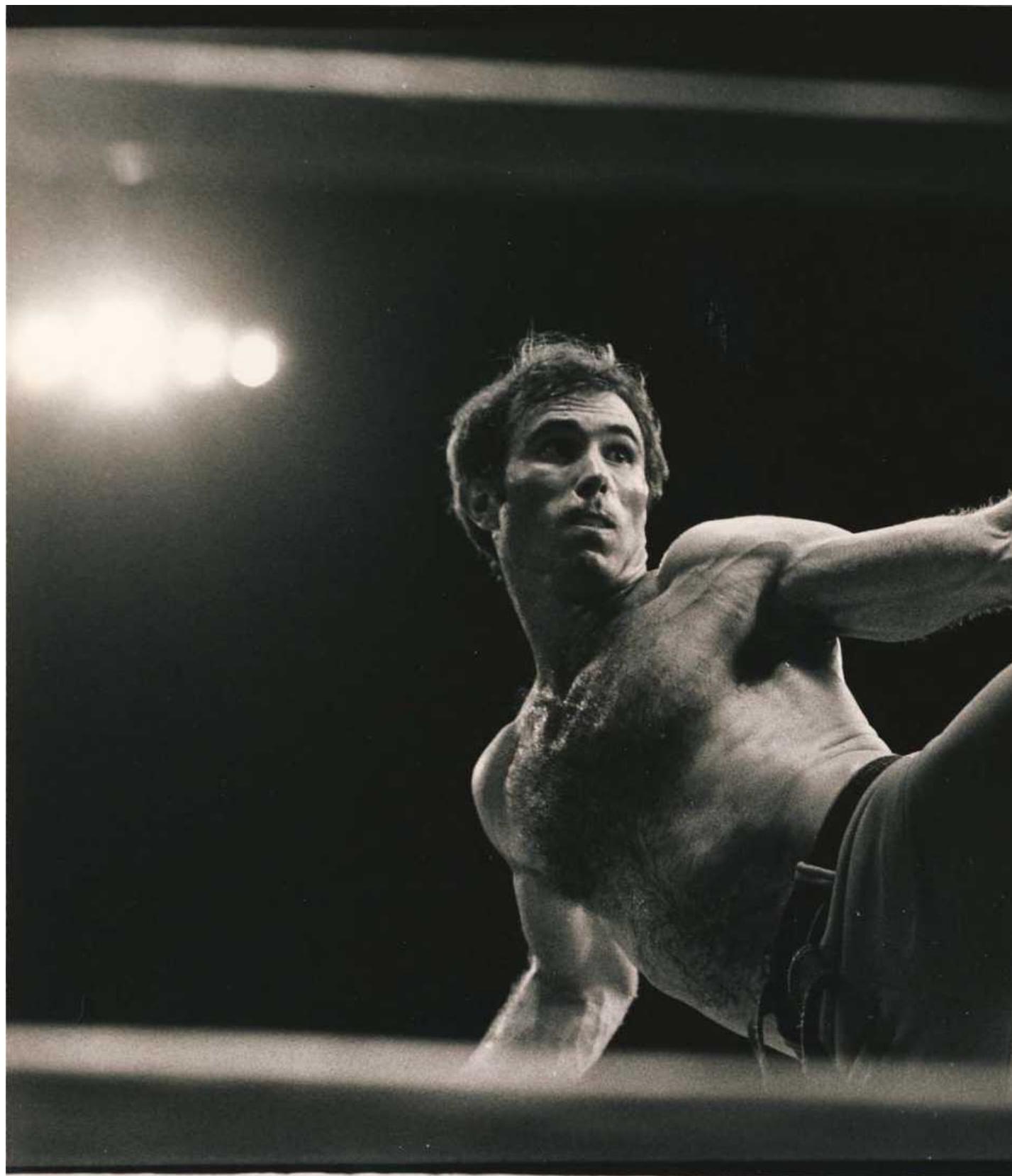
**In a nutshell:** After rescuing his kidnapped niece from a drug cartel, Colton MacReady (Adkins) must protect his family from retaliation. A sheriff and his deputies side with the criminals as they assault the ranch where MacReady and his family are holed up.

Adkins is perhaps best-known for playing Yuri Boyka in the *Undisputed* movies. Florentine directed *Undisputed 2* and *Undisputed 3*, as well as *Ninja*, *Power Rangers*, *WMAC Masters* and numerous other actioners.



• MMA sensation Holly Holm will be joined by fellow fighters Miesha Tate and Cristiane "Cyborg" Justino in an MMA thriller called *Fight Valley*. It will mark the acting debut for all three athletes. Breaking Glass Pictures has acquired worldwide rights to the film, which is written and directed by Rob Hawk. A theatrical and video-on-demand release is planned for spring 2016.

**In a nutshell:** When a woman is found dead on the street, her sister decides to carry out her own investigation. There, she meets Jabs (Tate), the most feared and respected ex-fighter in town. The sister realizes that to survive, she has to fight. Under the training of Jabs, she becomes determined to go face to face with her sister's killer. [fightvalley.com](http://fightvalley.com)

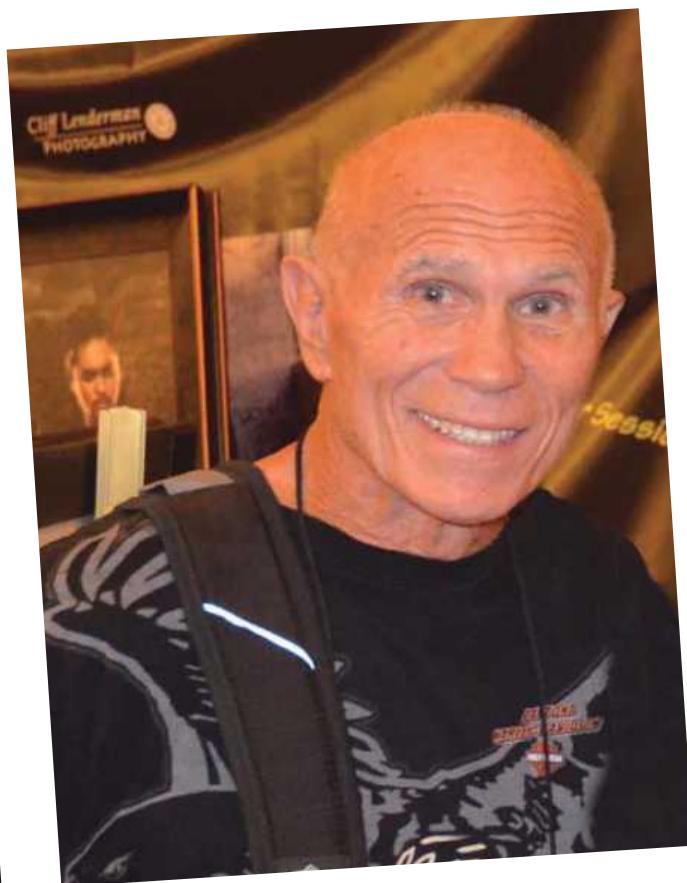


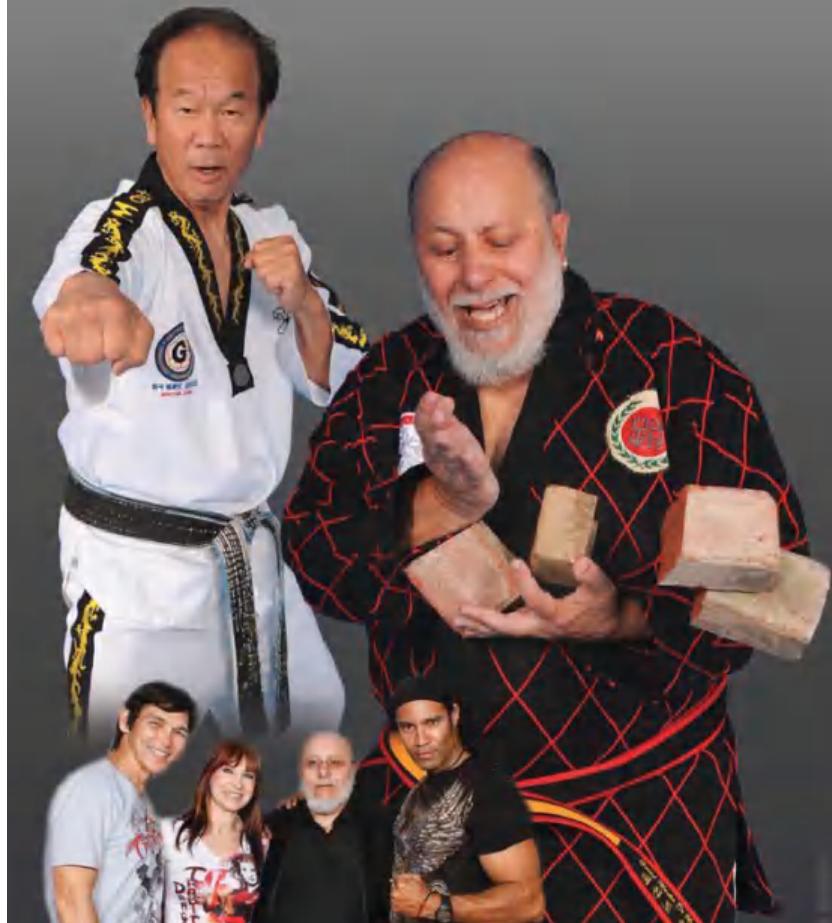


## THEN & NOW

◀ In addition to his stellar karate and kickboxing record, Bill Wallace has a resume that includes three *Black Belt* Hall of Fame inductions: In 1973 and 1977 he was named Karate Player of the Year, and in 1978 he was proclaimed Man of the Year. Along the way, he's co-starred in fight films such as *A Force of One* with Chuck Norris (1979) and *The Protector* with Jackie Chan (1985). Wallace, who has a master's degree in kinesiology from Memphis State University, served as a commentator for the UFC 1 on November 12, 1993. His most recent stint in front of the lens was for *Enter the Cage*, a sci-fi flick in production in the United Kingdom.

Of course, Wallace is best-known for his kicks, which he continues to teach while maintaining a seminar schedule that would put most martial artists half his age to shame. Speaking of age, on December 1, 2015, "Superfoot" turned 70. *Black Belt* wishes him a happy birthday and many more!





# MARTIAL ARTISTS TO ASSEMBLE IN FLORIDA

◀ The 41<sup>st</sup> World Health, Fitness, Wellness and Martial Arts Expo will take place on March 19, 2016, in Orlando, Florida. The schedule of events includes a *taekwondo dan*-testing workshop taught by Ibrahim Ahmed, a class on strength and conditioning for fight choreography conducted by Cynthia Rothrock, a kickboxing seminar with Don Wilson, and a clinic on kung fu and fight choreography courtesy of T.J. Storm.

Other training ops will focus on *hapkido*, self-defense, *tang soo do*, *tai chi*, *kempo*, *krav maga*, MMA and *jiu-jitsu*. Rudy Lams will teach a *jeet kune do* workshop and display his collection of Bruce Lee memorabilia, which is considered one of the largest in the world.

Proceeds from the expo will be donated to the Wounded Warrior Project. [starsforcharityexpo.com](http://starsforcharityexpo.com)

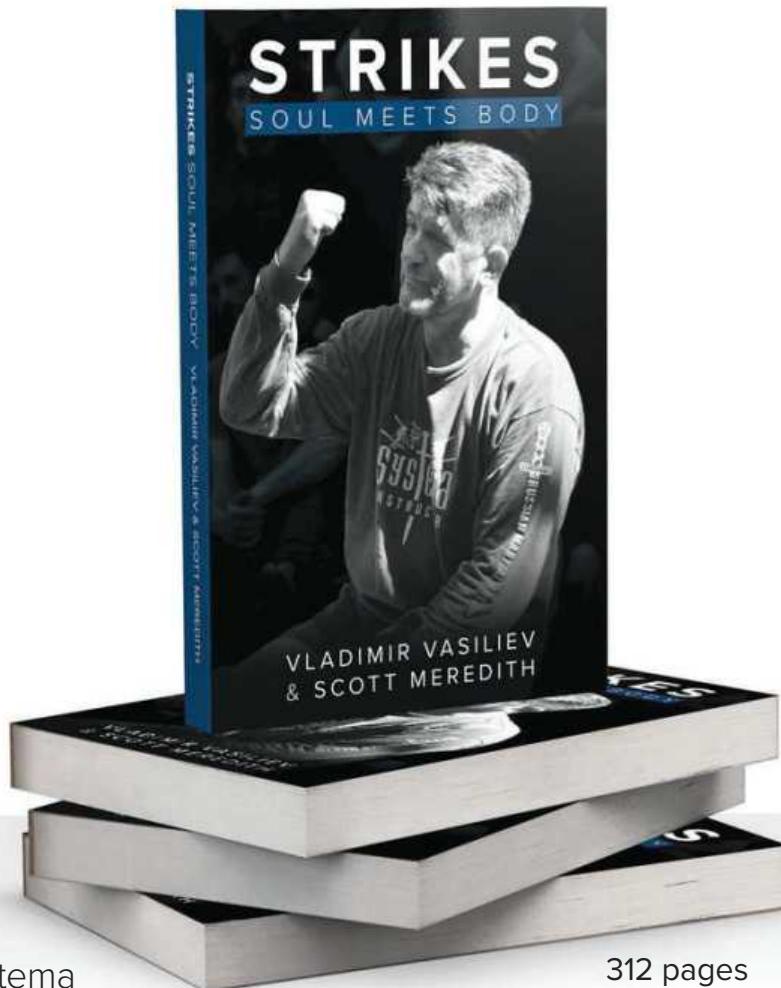
## NEWS BITES

- On November 27, 2015, **Bruce Lee** would have celebrated his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- A video circulating on YouTube proposes an intriguing theory, namely that the clumsy **Jar Jar Binks** character from the **Star Wars** prequels is actually a Sith master whose movements are patterned on *zui quan*, or *drunken-fist kung fu*. The video shows clips of real martial arts monks and compares them to movie scenes that show the blundering Binks.
- The world's largest martial arts class was conducted in **Abu Dhabi** on November 25, 2015, to coincide with National Sports Day and mark the UAE's 44<sup>th</sup> National Day. Organized by the UAE Jiu-Jitsu Federation, it was attended by the **Guinness World Records** committee, which confirmed that 2,481 *jiu-jitsu* students participated.
- **Black Belt** is about to release **Fumio Demura: Karate Weapons of Self-Defense — The Collector's Edition**. The ultimate guide to Japanese martial arts weaponry, it will include Demura's best-selling books on the **nunchaku**, **sai**, **bo**, **tonfa** and **kama**. Pre-order on Amazon.com.
- **Black Belt's** Facebook page has exceeded 547,000 "likes." Join the fun at [facebook.com/BlackBeltMagazine](http://facebook.com/BlackBeltMagazine).
- UFC President **Dana White** made an official appearance at the **Ring of Combat 53** in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Over the years, the ROC has sent more than 100 fighters to the UFC, including **Chris Weidman**, **Frankie Edgar** and **Matt Serra**.
- **Black Belt** Hall of Famer **Kelly McCann** appeared on **Fox News** with anchor Tucker Carlson. McCann's segment was titled "**Fighting Back: How Citizens Can Win the War Against ISIS**." For information about McCann's new **online combatives course**, visit [aimfitnessnetwork.com/blackbelt](http://aimfitnessnetwork.com/blackbelt).
- On November 20, 2015, **Black Belt** hosted **Leon Jay**, son of **small-circle jujitsu** founder **Wally Jay**, for a photo shoot. Expect the story in an **upcoming issue**.
- **Kareem: Minority of One**, an HBO documentary about the life of basketball legend **Kareem Abdul-Jabbar**, contains a fascinating segment on his **friendship with Bruce Lee**.
- At the 2015 Urban Action Showcase, the martial arts film **Black Salt** won the Cinemax/HBO action short-film competition. Recognition means that the movie will be distributed on **HBO/Cinemax On Demand** and **Max Go**. ☮

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## The Gentle(man's) Way

Sometimes an athlete's competitive career is determined as much by timing and luck as it is by anything within that person's control.

by Mark Jacobs

**C**ase in point: In 1964 Ernie Cates, one of the most decorated *judoka* in the United States, was able to muster only a fourth-place finish at the Olympic Trials. It wound up being his sole chance to make an Olympic team.

Cates had won the Marine Corps Judo Championships five times and was twice the interservice champion at a time when most of the best judo players in the country were found in the armed forces. But all those titles came between 1959 and 1963. Judo wasn't

introduced as an Olympic sport until 1964. If the Tokyo Games had come four years earlier, during the prime of Cates' competitive career, perhaps things would have been different. By 1964, however, age and injuries were starting to slow him down.

**NEVERTHELESS**, Cates put up a respectable showing in the round-robin competition and might have even won. However, his hopes of a first-place finish ultimately were derailed by what he believes was a specious call from the referee.

Against Ron Hubbard, Cates intentionally went to the ground with his arm extended, knowing Hubbard would attempt an armbar. But when Hubbard went for the lock as anticipated, Cates reversed his opponent, ending up on top in a pinning position. But it was too late. Referee Takahiko Ishikawa had called a halt to the match and awarded Hubbard the win.

"I never tapped out or signaled surrender, but Ishikawa called it an *ippon*," Cates said with only a hint of bitterness.

His final match at the tournament was against a top American judoka and future U.S. senator named Ben Campbell. Campbell came into the bout with an injured shoulder, but Cates knew that with the *ippon* already scored against him under the round-robin rules, he'd be unable to do better than third place in the tournament — even if he won the match.

Judo was a different sport back then, perhaps closer to the idealistic martial art of self-improvement envisioned by founder Jigoro Kano than the international Olympic sport it was about to become. There was sometimes an unwritten rule among judoka that if your opponent had an injury, you'd show him respect by not going after the injured body part. He, in turn, was supposed to avoid going after similar areas on your body.

Cates wouldn't say if this was the case when he faced an injured Campbell in the Olympic Trials. "He beat me, that's all I'll say," Cates said. "We'd fought many times, and Benny was a lot better than I was. He deserved to go to the Olympics."

**CATES WAS CLEARLY TRAINED** in the old way of doing judo. First exposed to some rudimentary *jujitsu* by neighboring Japanese during his youth in Iowa and then learning some "combat judo"

when he joined the Marines in 1954, he got his true introduction to the art while stationed in Okinawa.

At a time when few local *dojo* accepted foreign students, Cates had to search to find a school that would teach him. He began entering every tournament he could and soon met with unexpected success. In 1956 he led a team of five American servicemen to compete in the Ryukyu Island championships against leading teams from all the major colleges and police departments in Okinawa. Surprisingly, with only a few months of training, the Americans took the team title.

"It was mostly due to our teacher Matsumoto *sensei*," Cates said. "He was willing to cross lines and accept foreigners when most other schools wouldn't. But judo wasn't the same back then. It was a gentleman's art."

Cates said there was much more emphasis on Kano's motto of "maximum efficiency with minimum effort." Then European judoka debuted what Cates described as a wrestling-like method of judo that places a premium on physical strength.

"**THAT STYLE OF JUDO** didn't come to the U.S. until 1964 when judo became an Olympic sport," Cates said. "But I believe like Kano did that once you turn it into a competitive sport, competition creates egos and egos lead away from the art."

After his success in Okinawa, Cates continued to learn the art of judo in Japan at the Kodokan. That gave him the opportunity to train with some of the older masters, including Sumiyuki Kotani, one of Kano's last direct students. The head of the foreign students' division, Kotani allowed Cates to train on the main mats with the top Japanese judoka. Meanwhile, most foreigners had to practice separately.

The training was very different in those days with no formal class structure, Cates said. Instead, students simply showed up when they could and squared off with whomever was available. The instruction you got came from the person you were working with at the time. With his access to the main training room at the Kodokan, however, Cates had the privilege of getting personal tutelage from judoka

like All-Japan champion Toshiro Daigo, as well as older judoka like Kotani and Sadaki Nakabayashi. It was from a program these latter two had created to teach businessmen a simplified form of self-defense that Cates went on to develop his style of *neko-ryu goshin jitsu*.

"We started teaching this to Marine recruits at Parris Island," Cates said. "The moves were meant to be very simple and reflexive. At the time, we only taught four techniques, three throws and a choke."

**EVEN AT 82**, Cates continues to teach those techniques, and many others, with help from his son Moose Cates at their North Carolina dojo and at seminars around the country. Although he can't help but wonder what might have been the outcome if there was Olympic judo in 1960, he's more than content with the achievements he's had.

"Sure, I was younger and stronger in 1960," he said. "But I have no regrets. I had a really outstanding career in the martial arts, and I still love them." 

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## Shanghai Is Calling!

Not far from the Suzhou River in Shanghai, a man named Long is about to step into a ring for the first pro fight of his life.

by Antonio Graceffo

Tied to a nearby pier is an ultra-expensive yacht, a symbol of the new China, land of opportunity. The nouveau riche and the politically connected like to show their sophistication by buying VIP seats and tables at events like this.

In a ring set up under a tent, fighters from seven countries will compete in 12 kickboxing and MMA matches. In spite of a ticket price that's equivalent to three days' pay for the average worker, the event's sold out.

Long, 22, is one of millions of Chinese who've come to Shanghai seeking their fortune. The \$475 he'll be paid is a month's salary for a Shanghai factory worker and several months' wages for an agricultural worker in his home village.

His opponent is a full-time professional fighter from Shanghai University of Sport, a top training ground for *san da* fighters. Long is feeling a lot of pressure because he's an experiment of sorts: a Chinese fighter who trains on an international team with Thai

and American coaches. If he loses, the audience and the fight community will blame foreign coaching. If he wins, maybe the notion of having a foreign trainer will catch on here.

**LONG IS A LANKY FELLOW** who doesn't have an ounce of fat on his body. Physically, he's perfect for kickboxing. Even more important, he knows what's expected of him: To win, he has to be exciting to watch. He needs to make an impression on the judges — and his opponent — as quickly as possible. That's in contrast to countries like Thailand, where the first couple of rounds of most *muay Thai* matches are normally slow.

The bell rings, and both fighters come out aggressively. Under *san da* rules, they're allowed to use an array

# You can fight several times a month in Shanghai alone, if you're so inclined. If you don't mind traveling, you can get additional, often lucrative, deals in Macao and Hong Kong.

of techniques, from straight kicks, spinning kicks and backfists to takedowns, throws and body slams. It's often said that if not for its lack of ground fighting, professional san da would practically be MMA.

Long repeatedly lands flying knees, jumping kicks and superman punches. The knees and kicks make him look like Tony Jaa. The superman punches make him look like a guy who listened to the American MMA trainer at his gym. However, although he's physically fit and used to sparring, Long is inexperienced. Many of his techniques are wild and undisciplined, and they often miss. But the sheer volume of strikes compensates for the misses, and the ones that land are damaging his opponent.

In the end, no one is surprised when Long is declared the victor. A smile crosses his face, and a female representative of a corporate sponsor hands him a massive trophy and a red envelop that contains his winnings.

**THE MONDAY AFTER** the event, the local fighters are back at the gym training. Accompanying them are more than a few foreigners. Nearly half a million residents of other nations have come to Shanghai in recent years, and many of them are martial arts enthusiasts. I run into people from the USA, Canada, Mexico, Egypt, Uzbekistan, France, Germany and Estonia, all looking to pursue their martial arts dreams while enjoying China's economic boom.

As the Middle Kingdom prospers, its citizens and the foreigners are finding themselves in need of physical outlets for their stress and ways to keep their bodies and minds healthy. Yoga studios and wellness centers are beginning to crop up. Gym chains are numerous, even in shopping malls. Training in combat sports is less popular right now, but it's gaining momentum. In that riverside event, for instance, a Chinese fighter schooled in Brazilian *jiu-jitsu* competed against a Brit trained in kickboxing. You can't get much more international than that.

Because of Shanghai's martial arts multiculturalism, you never know what might be in store when you turn up at a training hall here. One week, you could spar with a 43-year-old Colombian with a black belt in *aikido* who wants to improve his boxing. You help him with his striking, and he schools you in grappling. Or you might run into an American high-school wrestler who needs to learn how to box and do submissions.

While most of the martial artists at the gym hail from outside China, some locals — most in their late 20s, educated and with disposable income — can be found taking MMA and muay Thai classes. Few harbor dreams in the fight sports. Long is an exception. "My family had no money for me to study," he said. "The gym is like a sports university for me." He said he plans to gain as much experience as possible and then open his own facility.

Another aspiring pro is 16-year-old Hector, a half-British, half-French boy who's lived in Shanghai for years. The day Long won his bout, Hector got KO'd. Three days later, he was back at the gym, training for his next match.

If he lived in America, he might be involved in typical high-school athletic pursuits, but most schools in China don't have organized sports. The exceptions are the institutions that are designated "sports high schools." In part, this is why so many martial arts "temples" and kung fu training centers are licensed as high schools or boarding schools. There, kids can focus on sports or martial arts in lieu of academic subjects. When they graduate, they have the option of attending one of China's sports universities.

The nature of Chinese society tends to discourage adults with an education and a job from getting into competitive sports. Part-time training in martial arts is tougher to find than it is in the USA or Europe, where teaching is big business. If a local manages to find a place to train part time, the fees can be high. In Shanghai, a month of MMA training runs \$85, a week's pay

for most people. Making things worse, the working adult would be expected to compete against men from the sports universities, younger guys who train full time.

**IF YOU'RE A FOREIGNER**, however, prospects are much brighter. Competing in a major city like Shanghai is attractive because of the prize money, which starts at \$500. That's significantly higher than in Thailand, where purses for foreigners range from \$30 to \$100. In both countries, of course, the amounts increase in direct proportion to the fighter's wins.

Another advantage to being a foreign fighter in China is the abundance of bouts. You can fight several times a month in Shanghai alone, if you're so inclined. If you don't mind traveling, you can get additional, often lucrative, deals in Macao and Hong Kong.

Now for the formalities: China is very strict about visas. To stay more than 30 days, you need to have a job or be enrolled in school. Many of the aforementioned temples and sports universities have programs that offer visas to foreign students who want to train. But getting one also means you'll need to cover training fees and living expenses — and have sufficient funds in your bank account to satisfy immigration officials.

In Shanghai, the cost of living is relatively high. Rent starts at \$600, and daily essentials like shaving cream can cost more than at home. Fees for food vary from dirt cheap for a bowl of noodles to \$15 for a restaurant burger. Public transportation is cheap and easy, which means you don't have to live close to your gym. Jobs are plentiful, and they usually pay well if you have skills that are in demand.

If you prefer traditional Chinese martial arts to MMA and san da, I recommend Shanghai University of Sport, where I'm a student. Tuition runs \$3,800 a semester, with on-campus accommodations starting at \$300 a month. That makes it perhaps the cheapest option for training in China. 



## Another Look at the Historical Meaning of Bushido

Imagine a political leader going to Duluth to tell Minnesotans this: "You are the descendants of Vikings. You have the blood of warriors in you. Your ancestors were feared over much of the known world. It's only reasonable that you are invincible, that you control the lands your ancestors ruled, that you have the rewards they enjoyed, that no other people can match you for courage and daring."

by Dave Lowry

**I**t's hard to imagine any Minnesotan believing such nonsense. But suppose in addition to being political figures, the people spreading this message were powerful — very powerful — military leaders. And suppose that people who disagreed with those leaders were made extremely uncomfortable. And suppose this message was spread constantly in the media, in schools, in popular music and in churches in Minnesota.

Yes, it's still hard to imagine something like this. You have to remember, though, that Japan in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, was, like the rest of the world, a far different place than it is today. Japan was less than 50 years from feudalism. It was just emerging on the world scene and flexing its muscles. And it was deeply angry at what it perceived as numerous slights from the Western world.

What Japan needed was a way to stir up its people, to engage them in a dream of conquest and expansion,

one fueled by the burning coals of their own righteousness and "specialness." The gasoline for this fire was *bushido*.

In the many years I spent with my Japanese *sensei*, I don't think I ever heard him use this word. In the classical martial arts, it's never mentioned. Largely, it's because *bushido* doesn't really mean anything. It's a vague term, like "patriotism," that has emotional value but not much in the way of a rational definition.

**THE JAPANESE** of the Taisho period (1912–1926) were a full generation removed from the days of the samurai. The samurai were, for them, not much different than the Vikings were for modern Minnesotans: figures from the vague past. The Japanese government and power structure used images of samurai, romantic and carefully crafted, to convince the Japanese that their ancestors had been motivated by a near-fanatic reverence for the emperor, by utter

obedience to rulers and by a willingness to sacrifice all for some cause.

The truth is that prior to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the emperor was about as important in the lives of Japanese, both samurai and commoners, as Santa Claus is to us. They knew of him and believed him to be the descendant of gods, but he played no role in their lives. They prayed to their own local or family deities.

Even in ancient Japan, the emperor was primarily a figurehead, one manipulated and even chosen by powerful warlords. "Emperor worship" became such a big deal when it was useful for the military and government to have a leader around whom the country could rally. While we think of Japan as a "country," in fact, it was until modern times a land of considerably independent fiefs and provinces where, much like the United States until the Civil War, citizens tended to identify with their village or region rather than their country.

Commoners could and often did stage strikes, even rebellions, usually over taxes. And armed with rakes and hoes, they nearly always defeated the samurai if things got violent.

The idea that loyalty meant an unquestioned obedience to authority was not a historical concept in Japan. Yes, the samurai were expected to give their lives for their lords, but commoners had no such obligation. Commoners could and often did stage strikes, even rebellions, usually over taxes. And armed with rakes and hoes, they nearly always defeated the samurai if things got violent.

Further, even for the samurai, loyalty was a two-way street. Just as a samurai was expected to give himself to his lord's needs, the lord had an obligation to take care of his people — samurai and commoners. The imperial government overlooked this, demanding the Japanese population sacrifice all for the war effort while rarely giving their needs consideration. The construct of Confucianism, that loyalty meant interdependency, was perverted.

**IN A SENSE**, the imperial powers duped the Japanese — or fed them myths and propaganda based on a fraudulent history. How does this affect you, a *karateka* or *budoka* in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Well, for many of you, your teachers or your teacher's teachers were once young men growing up in prewar and then wartime Japan. They inhaled much of this propaganda. They matured with the "truth" that Japan was unique, its society superior in every way to every other. They were imbued with the notion that authority could never be questioned. They grew up with a belief, almost religious, that the Japanese were destined to rule the world.

Bringing these beliefs and attitudes into *dojo* in the West clearly has had a profound effect on the development of the *budo* here. The distinction between the martial way and the tenets of

expansionist Japan got blurred — frequently. Students here were told that the behavior of their teachers was a reflection of the "bushido spirit." They were encouraged to believe what they were doing linked them to the samurai past of Japan. In reality, much of the spirit of the dojo has more to do with the imperialistic goofiness of Japan's fanatical military of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Such misunderstandings have obscured much of the real spirit of *budo*.

**MODERN KARATEKA** sometimes dismiss the history of their art as irrelevant. It is not. Nor is the history of Japan unrelated to the study and practice of karate. Those of us in the dojo are, to the contrary, experiencing it every day. ☮

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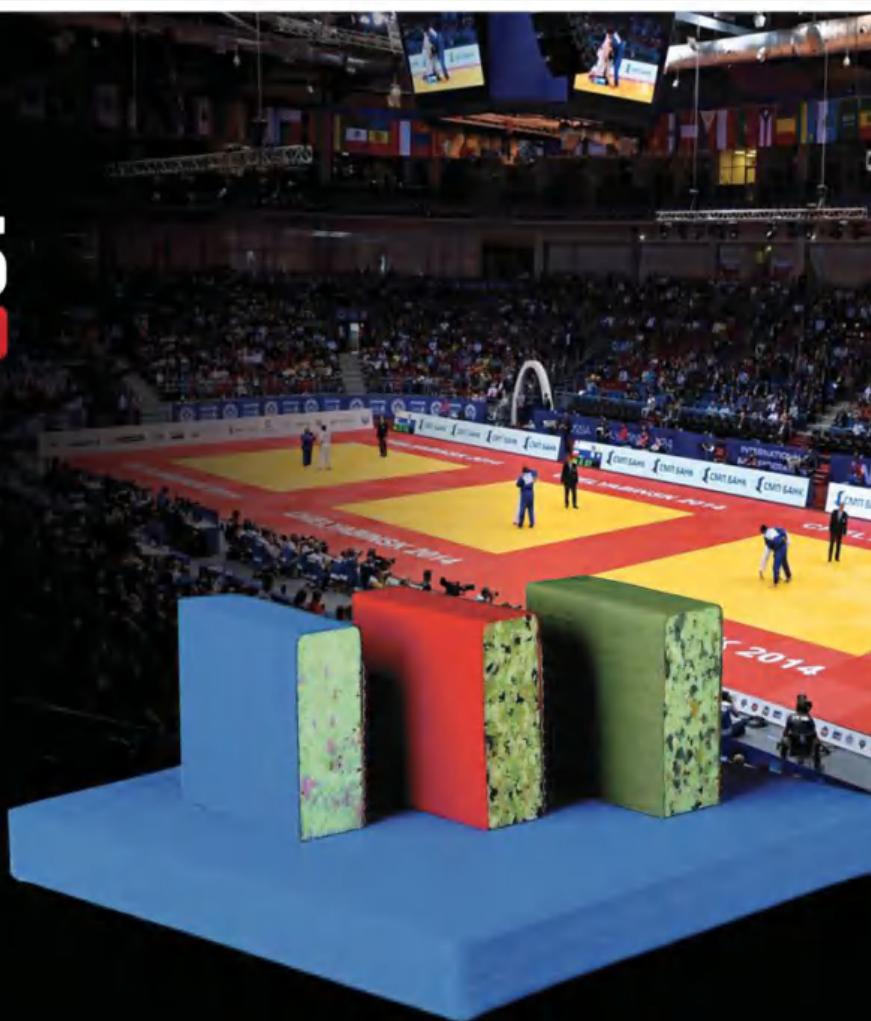
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## Ready to Strut Your Stuff in a Live Martial Arts Show?

Most of us would love to be in movies.

by Mark Jacobs

**U**nfortunately, no matter how good we are, most will never get a chance to perform on film. The next best thing to appearing on the silver screen is appearing onstage. Fortunately, that's an area where many martial artists are getting an opportunity to show their abilities, pick up some new skills and even earn a decent paycheck.

"Some of the live-action shows can pay pretty well, especially if they take you out of town to perform," said Jessie Graff, a martial artist, gymnast and stuntwoman.

Graff gained some of her early experience while doing live performances at theme parks in Southern California. "I did a show called *Spy Girl* at Six Flags, and they had a *wushu* world champion doing the choreography," she said.

"Working in that show, I got great training for free."

**ALTHOUGH SOME** traditionalists might turn up their noses at the idea of showcasing their skills in a live show at a theme park, there's a long history of martial artists performing in such spectacles. For hundreds of years, one of the key features of Chinese opera has been breathtaking fights performed by skilled martial artists. In fact, many of the flashy moves found in modern kung fu have their origins not on the battlefield but in these performances.

The tradition continues to this day. "Fight scenes play a very large part in our shows," said Brad Irish, entertainment and events manager at the Six Flags America amusement park in

Maryland. "We'll start with a theme like pirates vs. cowboys, and that gives us an excuse for the fighting. We have some exhaustive fight scenes that I create specifically around the actors' strengths. It's definitely a plus if the performer has martial arts experience."

**MOST STYLES** will benefit a person who's trying to land a gig in a live show, but some lend themselves to performance more than others. Graff said that while it's natural to throw short, tight strikes in real encounters because they work better, stage battles require bigger, broader techniques so the audience can follow the action. She said arts like *wushu* and *taekwondo* can develop the type of crowd-friendly moves needed in live shows.

"For martial artists with a strong foundation in real fighting, stage fighting is almost the opposite," Graff said. "But training for stage fighting is a chance for you to learn new skills that you might never have gotten to develop otherwise."

Just as fighting on a stage differs from self-defense, it also differs from screen fighting. That's because rather than focusing on making strikes look good for a single camera angle, stage performers must make their moves look believable to an arena full of people. Maximum control is needed to execute a kick or punch and get close enough to the opponent to make the audience, which is not only in front of the action but also to the left and right, buy it.

Even more challenging are battles with weapons. Done right, they're crowd-pleasers. Audiences love to watch martial artists fight with staves, swords and daggers. However, the precision has to be spot on, and with the added weight of the weapons, physical fitness is mandatory.

Consider the shows that run at Six Flags. They typically last 20 to 25 minutes with half that time devoted to all-out combat. Each day, three shows take place. Often, they're done five days a week and, because they're outdoors, the martial artists are at the mercy of the weather. Being in top shape is obviously essential.

**THEME PARKS AREN'T** the only outlet for martial artist who like to perform.

Consider the case of Marco Johnson, son of legendary forms champion and *Black Belt* Hall of Famer Willie Johnson. A leading tournament competitor in his own right, Marco has developed a unique brand of "kung fu hip-hop" that he and his students regularly perform at venues from car shows to concerts. They've even appeared with rap artist 50 Cent.

"They like to have us start off a show and build the crowd, then the artist will come onstage and do their songs," Marco said. His demo team uses everything from break dancing to a traditional Chinese lion dance to do that. Their routines incorporate empty-hand moves, weapons and choreographed exchanges. Their success has enabled them to put out a highlight reel of their performances.

Although it's unlikely that a person can earn a living just from doing independent demos, Marco said other benefits come from appearing in such shows — like recruiting new students for a school or capturing video footage. He's managed to parlay his demo experience into appearances in MTV videos and a starring role in the upcoming movie *Beast*.

"You've just got to find your market," Marco said. "Not everyone will fit into the world of hip-hop, but you might want to try something like Christian music and give performances for church audiences. Even performing at local parades can tap into thousands of new people. The more you put yourself out there, the more people will start to bring you in to perform for them."

**FOR MOTIVATED MARTIAL** artists, opportunities abound in the world of live shows. Employment need not be viewed as just a summer job or a part-time endeavor, Irish said. He started as a performer in a Six Flags show, but he now serves as a shining example of the growth potential in this industry.

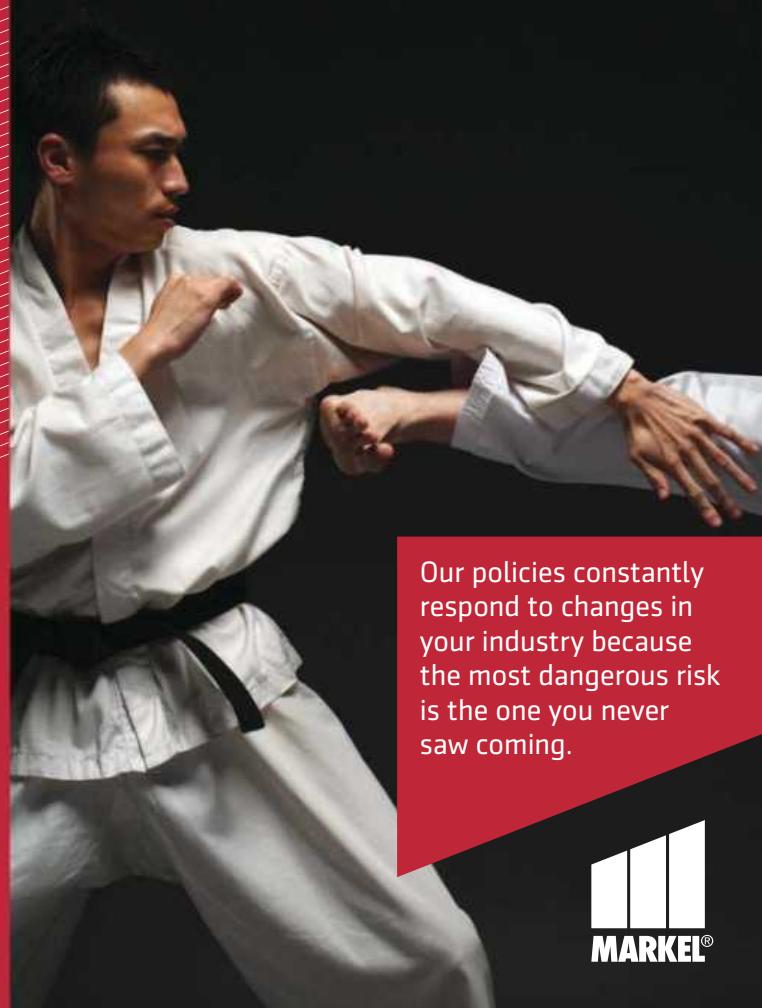
"I began here onstage in 2008 when they had a Batman stunt show running," Irish said. "When that ended, they decided to go in-house and asked me to write and choreograph shows. If you had told me 10 years ago that I'd be in charge of an award-winning stunt production, I'd have laughed at you. Live-action shows can definitely be rewarding in more ways than one." 

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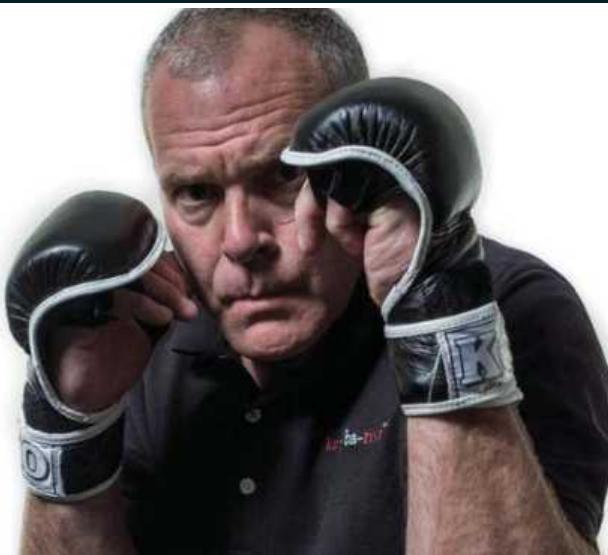
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## Wasted Days and Wasted Nights? No Way!

**It's a sad fact that when we conduct combatives seminars, some attendees who have spent money and effort developing their martial arts skills say they regret having done that. Usually, it goes something like this: "Man, I wish I had taken this approach earlier instead of spending so much time doing [this or that] martial art."**

by Kelly McCann

**I**n fact, a lot of combatives practitioners impugn traditional martial arts, and that's a shame. Don't throw the baby out with the bathwater! If anything, what should be impugned is the lack of effort to "streetify" the martial art being discussed or the practitioner's decision to choose form over function.

Take stances, for example. Few would argue that you should assume a traditional stance in a street confrontation, but learning how to use your hips to generate power in those stances is definitely useful. The principle simply needs to be applied to a more practical boxing or combatives guard rather than a horse stance.

**TO PRESERVE AN ART**, the curriculum should be taught accurately and respectfully exactly as it is. It shouldn't be altered or contaminated by outside influences. People who pursue learning an art form shouldn't think they wasted their time because they followed through and actually learned it. But neither the *sensei* nor the students should delude themselves about what they've actually learned, either.

Because traditional martial arts are about discipline and form, practitioners initially find it difficult to become

more fluid and "natural" (for lack of a better description) in their thinking and application when they first experience combatives. There is no *kata*, there are no ranks and there's little structure (except for the curriculum). This can be totally liberating or oddly confusing to traditionalists.

The ease with which martial artists adapt to combatives is more a result of how they trained than what they trained in. If the focus was on *kata*, they're likely going to be stiff. If, however, their training focused on sparring and contact, their performance will reflect a "looser," more relaxed and practical approach.

**DEFENSE IS ANOTHER AREA** in which traditional martial artists may feel like they come up short when they're first attacked in a combatives training scenario. High, low, outside and inside blocks aren't very effective in street encounters, but the principle of perpendicularity that those martial artists apply while doing them is. In other words, keeping the arms perpendicular to incoming punches is an integral part of both pursuits.

A boxer's head is punched at more often than perhaps anyone else's. There's a reason the boxing guard is taught and

used by all pugilists — the arms and hands are simply more often available and more immediately available than in any other configuration. The boxer can usually meet an incoming blow with perpendicularity and punch back at will without having to re-chamber.

Traditional martial arts blocks tend to get you "out of shape" quickly when multiple punches are thrown, especially punches from different angles. They also force you to re-chamber before you can counter, thus restricting you to whole-beat counters instead of half-beat counters.

Another difference is that many martial arts offer students a never-ending arsenal of techniques. Combatives, in contrast, is intentionally finite. Practitioners learn only what the instructor determines to be the most effective techniques, and they learn them right away. Neither approach is wrong, mind you. They're simply different pursuits taken for different purposes.

**INSTEAD OF CHASTISING** a martial artist for having undertaken something they don't necessarily agree with or see the utility of, combatives practitioners and instructors should look for ways to facilitate the transfer of the existing skill set to a new pursuit.

All students start out seeking to improve themselves, right? Whether it's to boost athleticism, balance and coordination, discipline or self-defense ability, we all have to start somewhere. Over time, however, our needs change and life happens, and we vector our interests accordingly. The fact that a person may have started with *taekwondo* and now wants to pursue a more succinct approach to self-defense through combatives doesn't mean everything he learned is bullshit. It means what is important to him has changed, that's all.

Nobody does anything because they think it's stupid. They do it because they believe that it's what they need, that it's what they want or that it benefits them in some way. Rather than alienate someone who presents himself as "here to learn," welcome him and help him make the transition from *-do* to *-jutsu* the way combatives teaches. 

*For information about Kelly McCann's new combatives course, which is designed to be streamed — anytime, anywhere — to your digital device, visit [aimfitnessnetwork.com/blackbelt](http://aimfitnessnetwork.com/blackbelt).*



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vs. Johnson's 205.) In short, Ketchel gave up every advantage there is for a shot at the heavyweight title.

We're lucky to have film of this fight because the disparity between the two boxers is almost humorous. Ketchel looked like a child going against Johnson, a child in all things except heart. At the opening bell, Ketchel waded in, looking for his target. The crafty heavyweight champ toyed with him and evaded his blows round after round, perhaps lending credence to the "fix" claim, but Ketchel never stopped swinging in search of that knockout. In the 12<sup>th</sup> round, Ketchel finally found his mark on his opponent's jaw, dropping the bigger man. The angered heavyweight soon got to his feet and went after the scrappy middleweight, dropping him with a punch so hard that two of Ketchel's teeth became embedded in Johnson's glove.

Fix discussion aside and even though he lost, Ketchel demonstrated enormous strength and stamina in mustering the power to drop such a big man, a big, formidable man at that, a man used to being hit by the heaviest and best men in the world and weathering those storms just fine. This is one of the reasons so many boxing historians revere Ketchel.

**JUST HOW DID** Ketchel build such extraordinary punching power and indomitable stamina? He was noted for running a Spartan training camp with a good work ethic, and for the most part, his training regimen mimicked what you'd find many fighters of the era, and today for that matter, doing. There was roadwork, bag work, calisthenics and sparring, but there was also an unusual feature that few other champions did.

Ketchel threw boulders.

We'll get back to the boulder throwing in a moment. First, let's consider this: Combat sports — be they boxing, kickboxing, grappling or MMA — all rely more on rotational power than on strict linear power. What I mean by that is strikes, throws, takedowns, sweeps and even submission setups use twisting, turning, torqueing and rotational power more than they do right-angle linear effort. Any strike worth its salt relies on rotational forces that begin at the ball of the foot and move upward through the knees, hips, waist, and finally the shoulders and arms (if the strike is a punch.) All strikes and all offensive grappling techniques exist in this rotational domain.

## Throwing Boulders for Punching Power

Stanley Ketchel, aka "The Michigan Assassin," was one of the greatest middleweight boxing champs of all time. He was noted for tremendous power in both hands, which he threw often.

by Mark Hatmaker

**M**ost of the descriptions of Ketchel's punching power penned by sportswriters of the time echo this one from Bert Randolph Sugar:

"Like Dempsey, Ketchel's defense was his offense. A murderous puncher with death at the end of each arm, Ketchel kept exploding six-inch shells in five-ounce gloves until something happened."

Ketchel always fought with murderous intent, whether it was in his unofficial 250-plus barroom fights or while wading through the middleweight division until his untimely death at age 24. He was so confident of his power and conditioning that on five occasions, he fought two men

in the same day. Once, he outscored six opponents in one six-round match, taking a fresh fighter for each round.

**PERHAPS THE GREATEST SHOW** of Ketchel's power and conditioning, if not his grit, came when he took a run at the heavyweight crown then held by the formidable Jack Johnson.

Some boxing historians insist the fight was fixed. Well, if this is true, somebody forgot to tell Stanley Ketchel. On October 16, 1909, in Colma, California, the middleweight champ met the heavyweight champ. Ketchel gave up height, reach and weight — 35 pounds to be exact. (Ketchel was 170 pounds

He'd pick up a boulder and hurl it as far as he could. Then he'd move on to the next one and rinse, wash and repeat.

**WITH THIS IN MIND**, let's consider the domain that the majority of our training takes place in. We do push-ups, squats, pull-ups, dips and other bodyweight exercises, all of which are executed in up-down linear fashion. Back squats, bench presses, barbell rows, kettlebell swings, push presses — again, all are exercises that exist in linear planes and do little to develop the rotational power of combat sports.

All the aforementioned exercises are necessary and useful to build overall conditioning, but perhaps it was Ketchel's adherence to heavy rotational work that allowed him to be valued so highly in his own division and to be as surprising as he was when he was at such a size disadvantage. With that in mind, let's get back to the boulder tossing.

In addition to doing conventional conditioning, Ketchel would spend one hour a day throwing boulders. He didn't

simply clean them, press them, deadlift them; he threw them. He'd pick up a boulder and hurl it as far as he could. Then he'd move on to the next one and rinse, wash and repeat until his hour was up. You can't help but make the assumption that this diligence and adherence to rotational specificity contributed to Ketchel's astonishing punching power and stamina.

**SO HOW MIGHT WE ADAPT** Ketchel's methods to our need to build rotational power? Most of us don't have spare boulders lying around, but if you do, you know what to do. If not, try the following:

Grab as many "slam balls" or medicine balls as you can. If you have only one, make sure it's a heavy one. I like to use four: a 20 pounder, a 30, a 40 and a 50. I place them in a line behind cone A. Then I mark off 10 feet — if you go for more than that, you might lose your "freshness" — and set my timer for 30 minutes.

When I'm ready to begin, I pick up the slam balls any way I desire and toss them any way I can: push pass, swing toss, granny toss, overhead toss, whatever. I just make sure to mix them up and get them to cone B 10 feet away. Then I walk over to that line and send them all back to cone A.

Because I'm throwing only half the time that Ketchel did, I'll frequently add a set of 10 penalty burpees for each makeshift boulder that falls short of the 10-foot mark. I find that being honest with penalties helps keep the quality of work high.

Whether this turns out to be the key to building Ketchel-esque punching power or not, one thing is certain: It can't hurt. Well, it can't hurt beyond the sore muscles. ✌

● **ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** Mark Hatmaker is a Knoxville, Tennessee-based trainer and the founder of Extreme Self-Protection.

# #AimFitness



## Taekwondo's Preteen Terminator

The martial arts world has had its share of child prodigies.

by Mark Jacobs

They're usually forms competitors — those precocious tykes you see at tournaments, wearing uniforms that are two sizes too big and drawing applause for their amazing acrobatic displays. Less common is the prodigy who excels in sparring.

Natalie Hershberger is looking to redefine the martial-prodigy image. The 11-year-old Ohio native has competed in *taekwondo* since she was 6. She's already won four national titles as a black belt, two AAU Junior Olympic titles and, most recently, her first age-group championship at the U.S. Open.

"I guess I'm kind of a natural at taekwondo," she said. "I have long legs, so it's easy for me to kick. But it still took lots of practice for me to get good at it."

**TAEKWONDO IS A FAMILY** affair for the Hershbergers. Her father Chris started training when he was just 10 and now coaches Natalie and her siblings — Cameron, 14, and Liam, 5 — at his NextGen Taekwondo school in Mansfield, Ohio.

"It's just something I've always been passionate about," he said. "None of my kids is expected to compete, but I guess there is an expectation that everyone in our family get a black belt."

Natalie first showed an interest in training after watching big brother Cameron compete. She thought all that kicking stuff looked cool and insisted on giving it a try. Chris was reluctant to put a 6-year-old in competition, but he relented and took her to a qualifying tournament for the state championship. To his surprise, Natalie won. She went on to take top honors at the state tournament and then the nationals — after just seven months of training.

**IT'S A SIGN OF THE SERIOUSNESS** with which the Hershbergers approach competition that winning a decision in the finals of her first national championship wasn't enough. The following year, father and daughter game-planned specifically for the girl Natalie beat in the previous year's finals.

"The first year, it was a really close fight, but we didn't know how the other girl fought," Natalie said. "The next year, we worked on countering what she did. She was really good with her front leg, so I'd practice pushing that leg away when she kicked and countering with my back leg."

The result was a win on "point gap," which is taekwondo's version of a technical knockout wherein the fight is stopped because one competitor has opened such a large point lead. That's something Natalie has become familiar with, frequently point-gapping outmatched foes in tournaments.

Her opponents, however, aren't quite used to it. On more than one occasion, she's made her competition cry with her dominance — something she admits to being uncomfortable with.

"It's kind of disappointing when I see them cry, especially if it's someone I know," she said.

**NATALIE OWNS UP TO HAVING CRIED** a few times, herself — but only in training. She noted, with a touch of pride, that she's too mentally tough to let opponents see her cry if she loses. She'll need that kind of toughness if she's to fulfill her goal of competing in the 2020 Olympics. If she's allowed in — she'll be 16 years old — it will make her the youngest athlete to represent the United States in Olympic taekwondo.

"She told me when she was 6 or 7 that she wanted to be an Olympic gold medalist," her father said. "I tried to explain that it would be a 10-year process of hard work. She said she didn't care how long it took — she wanted to do it."

For Natalie, "doing it" means training three hours a day, six days a week. Besides engaging in her normal bag workouts and sparring sessions, she boosts her conditioning by doing 100 sit-ups, 100 push-ups, 100 squats and 100 burpees every day.

With any child prodigy, there's always the concern that the kid is being pushed too hard and it's the parent, rather than the child, who really wants to achieve. Chris Hershberger said he's well aware of this, which is why he strives to not push his daughter.

"I've tried to prevent myself from becoming the kind of father who lives through his children," he said. "She has to come to me and say she wants to do this for herself; otherwise, I won't push her to train. But it's a delicate balancing act. I want to be a fun dad, but I have to separate that from being her coach. Our expectations for her are higher than most fighters we have because of how good she is. We don't want her to just win; we want her to dominate."

Natalie has been dominating so much that she admits motivation is sometimes a problem. "Lately, I haven't been as intense as I used to be because the wins have been easier," she said. "I have to work on getting my intensity back up there."

In her less-intense moments away from the gym, her favorite pastimes are reading and writing. She's already penned two books with her father's help: *Kick It Fit With Natalie* and *Tough Girls Finish First*. Her long-term goal is to become a stuntwoman.

But first, there's the 2020 Olympics to conquer. The Games are only five years away, but for a prodigy who's used to achieving things fast, that can feel like an eternity. 

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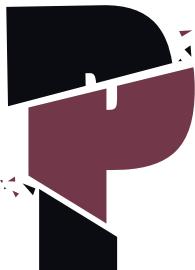


BUSINESS INTERRUPTION INSURANCE



# MARTIAL ARTS IN THE BADLANDS

ALREADY A STAR IN ASIA, DANIEL WU IS BRINGING HONG KONG-STYLE FIGHTING TO AMERICAN TELEVISION!  
BY DR. CRAIG D. REID



Perhaps it was a coincidence, perhaps not. At the 2015 San Diego Asian Film Festival, one of the movies shown was *Go Away Mr. Tumour*, a tear-jerker romantic comedy from China about a cancer patient who falls in love with her doctor. Even though it's an Oscar contender for Best Foreign Language Film, it features two actors most Americans have never heard of.

Just one day after it was screened, the AMC channel premiered *Into the Badlands*, a post-apocalyptic series that features what's possibly the best martial arts action that's ever been filmed for American television.

The connection between the two is Daniel Wu. A heartthrob in Hong Kong, he plays the doctor in *Tumour* and the high-kicking hero in *Badlands*. The take-away here is that in addition to being an accomplished martial artist — one who can swing a sword like nobody's business — he's an extremely talented and versatile actor.

As I said, most Americans probably don't know who Daniel Wu is. That's about to change.

## TRAINING IN TAI CHI

Daniel Wu was born in 1974 in Berkeley, California, to immigrant parents from Shanghai. His most impactful early exposure to the martial arts came at age 7. "My grandparents took me to a theater in Chinatown to see Jet Li's *Shaolin Temple* (1982)," he recalled. "My grandfather said, 'All those other kung fu films you've been watching — that's fake. This is real.'

"When I saw the scene where all the monks practiced their different weapons and praying mantis kung fu in a field, I was totally smitten. I said, 'I gotta learn that!'"

The youth began reading *Black Belt* before he got a chance to pursue his dream, and the masters who appeared in the magazine whet his appetite for action. When he turned 8, he convinced his mother to let him order some throwing stars from an ad in the back of the magazine. Several years later, she finally permitted him to take kung fu.

"She knew I was a naughty kid, and if I had learned martial arts too early, I'd have gotten into fights unless I had the right teacher," Wu said. "She was probably right about that."

When he was 11, the right teacher came along. His name was Dr. Yun Chung Chiang, founder of the Wen Wu School of Martial Arts in El Cerrito, California. Chiang had begun his training 60 years earlier under Guo Lien-yu, the man who introduced the rare *guang ping yang* style of *tai chi* to the West. Chiang still teaches Shaolin kung fu and practices Chinese medicine at his school.

After class, Wu would sit around and drink tea with his teacher. Their conversations often veered from martial arts-related topics and focused on Wu's Chinese roots. "It was cool to be taught things about Chinese culture that my parents couldn't teach me," Wu said.

That's not to say most of their time together was sedentary. In addition to *tai chi*, Chiang taught his pupil *dayen chi kung*, which translates as "wild goose chi kung." Years later, when Wu got the itch to compete, he began cross-training in *wushu* — even though his decision didn't go over well with Chiang.

"*Sifu* didn't believe in competition," Wu said. "Now that I'm older, I understand."

## WAY OF WUSHU

"As a wushu practitioner, my empty-hand specialty was *zhang chuan* (long fist), and my favorite weapons were the spear and broadsword — which is weird because most people do straight sword and spear, or broadsword and staff," Wu said. "I also did *tong yi chuan*."

When he enrolled at the University of Oregon as an architecture major, Wu was caught between a rock and a hard place. As much as he wanted to focus on his martial arts, he was forced to make sacrifices for his academic work. Yet somehow he found time to start a campus *wushu* club.

"The school had karate, judo and *taekwondo* clubs but no Chinese martial arts," Wu said. "So in 1994, I decided to introduce wushu to the student body. I did demonstrations, and it grew from there. We would meet two to three times a week, two hours a shot. Because it was my passion, I'd always make time to run the club and keep up the team."

Fast-forward two decades: Wu visited his old stomping ground to speak at a film festival. "I dropped by the club to watch, and I gave a little speech saying, 'When I began this club, I didn't think it'd be around in 15 years.' When a girl said she was 3 years old back then, I grinned and said, 'Oh, my God, you make me feel old.'"

## OPPORTUNITY IN ASIA

While Wu attended college, he often dreamt about being a stuntman in a Jackie Chan film. It never occurred to him that a career in moviemaking might be in his future. It took the occasion of the transfer of Hong Kong's sovereignty back to China to give him a nudge in that direction.

In 1997 he decided to fly to Hong Kong to witness the historic handover. A soul-searching mission of sorts, it was also a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to see the former British colony being returned to China. In a moment of downtime in a bar, Wu attracted the attention of a casting



Photo by James Minchin III/AMC



MY EMPTY-HAND SPECIALTY WAS ZHANG CHUAN (LONG FIST),  
AND MY FAVORITE WEAPONS WERE THE SPEAR AND BROADSWORD.





THE MAIN GOAL WAS TO CREATE SOMETHING THAT NO ONE HAD





EVER SEEN ON AMERICAN TV.



scout for a TV commercial. Because he was low on dough, he accepted the offer of employment. "The ad came out a month later," Wu said. "A director saw it and asked me to play the lead in his passion project.

"I was like, you're crazy! I'd never acted before and didn't speak Cantonese at the time, so I turned it down. For a month, he called me every day, trying to convince me to do it. My mom was very encouraging, saying I could always fall back on architecture. So I told the director, 'If you don't blame me for screwing up, I'll give it a try.'"

Three months after the filming finished, Wu realized he'd fallen in love with the process. "Two weeks later, the director recommended me to another director," he said. "I did six movies within a year. Eighteen years later, I've done 60-plus films in Hong Kong."

## BACK IN THE USA

For his first American acting role — as "Sunny," the lead character in *Badlands* — Wu once again had to be cajoled into it. He joined the project as an executive producer who would be in charge of martial arts. He recruited his producing partner Stephen Fung, whom he met on the set of *Bishonen*, one of his first films, to serve as fight director; Dee Dee Ku as fight choreographer; and a slew of Hong Kong veterans to do stunts.

"The main goal was to create something that no one had ever seen on American TV and to feature dynamic, stylized action," Wu said. And that's precisely what *Badlands* is doing.

Filmed in Louisiana, the series takes place in a dystopian America 500 years in the future. After an apocalypse, society has reset itself. The region known as the Badlands is run by seven barons, each of whom controls an industry. Sunny's baron is the most powerful one; he lords over the land that produces opium. He also commands an army of "clippers," enforcers who do his bidding. Sunny is the head clipper.

Despite such a detailed back story, Wu didn't seriously consider trying out for the role of Sunny. "I was 40 and hadn't done a fighting role in six years," he said. "I wasn't sure if my body could take it."

As soon as he was briefed on the shooting plan, he knew his concerns were valid. The schedule called for six-day workweeks with two filming units, one for drama and one for action. That action would include two intense fight scenes for each of the first season's six episodes. With Wu content as an executive producer, the search for Sunny began.

"AMC wanted the character to be Asian, a martial artist and a decent actor," Wu said. "In my mind, we should be looking for someone in their late 20s or early 30s. Then if the show was suc-

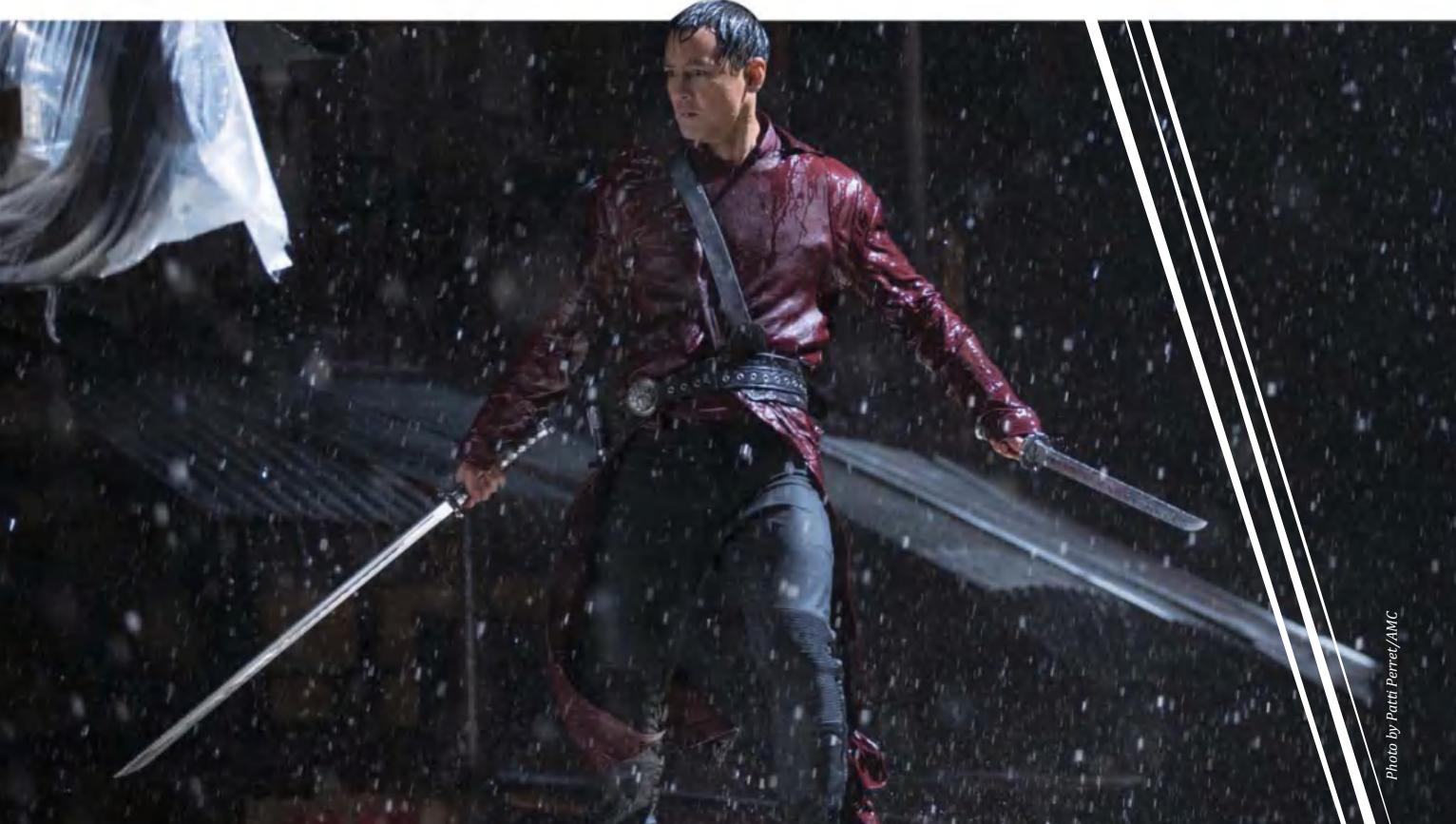


Photo by Patti Perret/AMC

cessful, we could go on for five or six years. He also needed to be physically ready for that kind of abuse."

Most of the men-who-would-be-Sunny were martial artists with little to no acting experience, Wu said. Others were good actors with no martial arts skills. "We really needed an experienced martial artist who also had a film-fighting background," he said.

One day, a friend asked, "How can they do a martial arts television series with Daniel Wu that doesn't star Daniel Wu?" The rhetorical question did the trick. He decided to audition — after he'd brushed up on his martial arts skills.

"I wanted to make sure that I deserved this role, rather than having it handed to me because I'm a producer," Wu said.

## REPRESENTING HIS ROOTS

In *Badlands*, Sunny is obviously an Asian character. AMC, however, should be lauded for not making Sunny an Asian caricature. Wu does not speak with an accent, and he's not forced to exhibit any stereotypical Asian behavior.

"It's tricky, though, because many could say that an Asian doing martial arts is stereotypical," he said. "But at the same time, it's not because over here in Asia, that's about 30 percent of the movies we make. Martial arts is an important part of our culture and history."

"We've come a long way since *Kung Fu* (1972). Instead of a white guy with a yellow face, we now have an Asian guy playing the Asian role. Being one of the few Chinese-Americans on a TV show is also a step forward."

Rumor has it that as *Badlands* moves forward, Sunny will undergo a spiritual transformation. "I feel this is very important," he said. "The show has martial arts violence, but martial arts isn't just about fighting, and so we wanted to feature the spiritual side, which means chi kung, meditation and spiritual grounding. These are the reasons I really wanted to do *Badlands*."

It's that deeper meaning that makes the martial arts so attractive to Wu. He said he enjoys watching MMA but acknowledges that its popularity serves only to promote the sporting facet of the discipline. "The art side of martial arts is being lost," he said. "Fighting — being a warrior able to destroy someone — is one side of martial arts, yet you need balance. I wanted to make that point on national TV, to show the other sides of martial arts. Sunny's real journey is going from being this coldblooded killer to eventually becoming a good guy." 

● **ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** Dr. Craig D. Reid's book *The Ultimate Guide to Martial Arts Movies of the 1970s: 500+ Films Loaded With Action, Weapons and Warriors* is available from Amazon.com.

THE SHOW HAS  
MARTIAL ARTS  
VIOLENCE, BUT  
MARTIAL ARTS  
ISN'T JUST ABOUT  
FIGHTING.

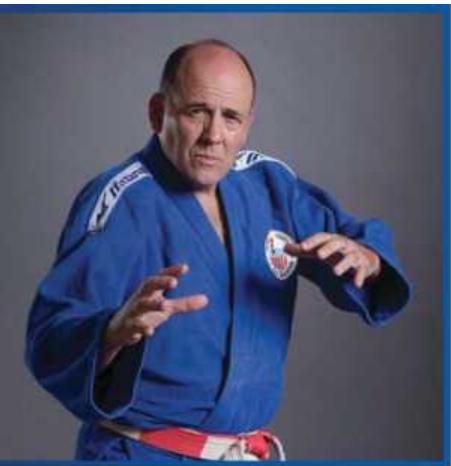


## A WU-nderful Way to Launch a Film Career

Because he's so versatile as an actor, Daniel Wu has managed to land roles in a variety of motion pictures — not just action flicks. His performances reveal a sensitive side that can touch the hearts of any audience and a stern side that's perfectly suited for historical or modern fight films. That flexibility has put him in demand in Asian filmmaking. Listed here are a few of the flicks on his resume:

<i>Warcraft</i> (based on the video game)	2016
<i>Chinese Zodiac</i> (with Jackie Chan)	2012
<i>Tai Chi Hero</i> (directed by Stephen Fung)	2012
<i>Tai Chi Zero</i> (directed by Stephen Fung)	2012
<i>The Man With the Iron Fists</i> (with RZA)	2012
<i>Shinjuku Incident</i> (with Jackie Chan)	2009
<i>The Banquet</i> (with Ziyi Zhang)	2006
<i>House of Fury</i> (produced by Jackie Chan)	2005
<i>Around the World in 80 Days</i> (with Jackie Chan)	2004
<i>Blade of Kings</i> (with Donnie Yen and Jackie Chan)	2004
<i>New Police Story</i> (with Jackie Chan)	2004
<i>Naked Weapon</i> (with Maggie Q)	2002

# GRUPO



# GRUPO

# FOR



Does Being an  
Olympic Sport  
Make a Martial Art  
More Popular, or  
Does It Lead to the  
Decline of Tradition  
and Technique?



# AGAINST

In case you live in a cave, here's a news flash: 2016 is an Olympic year. The 31<sup>st</sup> Summer Games are scheduled to take place August 5-21 in Rio de Janeiro. Whenever the world's premier sporting event rolls around, we find ourselves reflecting on how the Olympics have affected the martial arts.

Part 1 of this article examines whether the Games have been good for judo and taekwondo. For input, we interrogated five experts, prompting them with questions and hoping they'd offer opinions on other topics that are of concern to them and practitioners of their art.

— Editors

## ART: JUDO ADDED TO THE OLYMPICS: 1964

**EXPERT:** Gary Goltz, former president of the U.S. Judo Association, current board member of the Hal Sharp Judo Teachers Foundation

### QUESTION: Is pre-1964 judo different from post-1964 judo?

Actually, a lot has changed since then. This started after World War II, when judo's focus became much more on the sport aspect rather than the martial arts aspect. It had a lot to do with the occupation of Japan and Gen. Douglas MacArthur's ban on the practice of all martial arts. The Kodokan set out to impress the American officers by showing that judo was a sport and a peaceful activity. When the Olympics came to Japan in 1964, they introduced it as an exhibition event. Back then, there were no weight divisions and no females. The only scores were the *wazari* (half point) and the *ippon* (full point). Matches lasted up to 20 minutes.

### QUESTION: Did the imposition of rules for the Olympics change judo from a martial art to a martial sport?

Olympic judo today is more driven by rules than ever before. Wrestling-type moves such as *kata guruma* (shoulder wheel) and *morote gari* (two-hand leg reap) are now illegal. This was to force players to use more standing techniques such as *uchimata* (inner-thigh throw), *harai gosh* (hip sweep), *seionage* (shoulder throw) and *ashi waza* (foot techniques). The goal was to look good on TV and differentiate judo from wrestling.



### QUESTION: Has Olympic inclusion boosted the popularity of judo overall?

Judo's popularity soared in most countries with the exception of the U.S. This was due to the national judo organizations' insistence on maintaining their members' amateur status to meet Olympic requirements at the time. Here, other martial arts — karate in the 1960s, kung fu in the '70s, and then Brazilian *jiu-jitsu* and *krav maga* now — flourished in part because of the entertainment industry and successful commercialization methods.

### QUESTION: Does being an Olympic sport help judo create stars?

Absolutely. There are many such examples in Japan, Korea, France, Brazil, Holland, England and even Cuba. The best example in the U.S. is Ronda Rousey, who took a bronze medal in Beijing and

then left the sport to become the biggest female star of the UFC. Kayla Harrison, on the other hand, is the only American Olympic judo athlete to take a gold but is far less well-known because she's chosen to stay focused on judo and enter the 2016 Olympics in Brazil. This illustrates the dilemma faced by those who devote themselves to becoming Olympic champions. They may find that they have limited career options upon retirement.

### QUESTION: Did judo lose anything when one portion of it — competition — was added to the Olympics while other parts such as kata were not?

When judo became an official Olympic event, competition became the priority. Kata have been made much more consistent over the last five years by the International Judo Federation, perhaps in an effort to eventually make it part of judo in the Olympics, too.

## ART: JUDO

**EXPERT:** Hayward Nishioka, 1967 Pan-American Games gold medalist, *Black Belt's* 1968 Judo Player of the Year and 1977 Judo Instructor of the Year

### QUESTION: How has judo changed since it was added to the Games?

Judo today is stronger, faster and tactically different due to the influence of the Olympics. The Olympic motto of Altius, Citius, Fortius (Higher, Faster, Stronger) seems to hold true for Olympic sport judo. One need only look at YouTube submissions to compare the old with the new. Where once weight, height, strength, cardio fitness, nutrition and specialized tactics took a back seat to *waza*, or techniques, they are now integral pieces of a total package. If you're missing any one part of the equation, you're at a distinct disadvantage. Now, all your bullets had better be hyper-packed with powder or you're in trouble because everyone else comes fully loaded for war.

While the quest for excellence is an admirable goal and everyone wants to be a gold medalist, this was not the sole direction that Pierre de Coubertin or Jigoro Kano had intended for sports or for judo. Both were physical educators and came from wealthy families. De Coubertin knew the positive benefits of sport and wanted to use it to promote world peace. Kano believed that the practice of judo would develop better citizens. Unfortunately for them, the Olympic Games and judo have taken on a life of their own and gone in a different direction.

### QUESTION: Did Olympic officials intentionally alter judo?

The intent at the upper level of the International Olympic Committee is the thought that bigger is better. This is not to say that their higher goals have been displaced by the desire to make money. They have not, but it sure helps when funds are plentiful rather than sparse. The 1984 Los Angeles Olympics, where millions were made, served as a model for running the Games. That's when we saw professional marketing, increased sponsorships and increased costs to secure TV rights. Events had to change to meet the demands of TV sponsors who wanted more bang for their buck. They



called for more action, more excitement and less downtime.

In an effort to adapt, judo changed its rules to make the game faster and more exciting — for example, encouraging an attack every 20 to 25 seconds, requiring the right size *judogi* to allow for attacks to be done and eliminating some excessive bowing practices.

So, yes, the Olympics forever changed the face of judo. It is no longer a martial art steeped in tradition and culture, which was valued by those searching for esoteric Asian answers. It's now an Olympic sport driven by scientific training formulas for becoming a champion.

### QUESTION: Did the Olympics make judo more popular?

Judo people once said, "If judo is included in the Olympics, it will help make it popular." It's now in the Olympics, but judo is still not popular in the United States.

Later, people said, "If we have Olympic medalists, that will make a difference." We've had several, but it hasn't made a difference here.

Records indicate that there actually

has been a per capita decline. For example, the U.S. Judo Federation has had a membership of 10,000 for the past 10 years. The second-largest organization is the U.S. Judo Association with 7,000 members. The smallest is the national governing body known as USA Judo, which has a membership of 5,000. In a country where the population has gone from 290 million to 330 million in the past decade, judo has not grown.

Contrast those numbers with France, which now has a population of 68 million and a judo membership of 600,000.

### QUESTION: How else is judo in France different from judo here?

In France, judo is a household word. The country is home to many of the finest *judoka* in the world. Its current champion Teddy Riner is without rival. He just won the World Championship for the eighth consecutive time. No one even comes close historically or in the present. So although Olympic judo can create stars, unfortunately it does not in our country.

Nevertheless, the Games are a place where the ideals of developing a great citizen and a responsible person still prevail in spirit.

## ART: TAEKWONDO

**ADDED TO THE OLYMPICS: 1988**

**EXPERT:** Hee-il Cho, ninth *dan*, *taekwondo* instructor, *Black Belt's* 1989 Co-Instructor of the Year and 2012 Man of the Year

### QUESTION: Have the Olympics altered the way taekwondo is taught?

Many schools have changed because taekwondo is in the Olympics. However, many schools have stayed on the traditional teaching path. It often depends on the instructor's age and point of view. Younger instructors may have had exposure only to the World Taekwondo Federation, which means there's a new generation of WTF instructors and students who are more geared to the Olympic-sport style of taekwondo.

At my school, we prefer to teach a combination of both styles. We do not gear our program specifically to the Olympics. Instead, we use a teaching style designed to give maximum benefit to the students.

### QUESTION: Has taekwondo changed from a martial art to a martial sport since 1988?

In many ways, taekwondo has changed into an Olympic competition. Many technical advantages have evolved because of the competitive nature of practitioners around the world. Every country wishes to win a gold medal, and therefore many techniques have come about which are specifically geared to Olympic rules. These techniques, however, may not be the most effective for self-defense. For instance, because of Olympic rules, hand techniques in taekwondo have diminished while high kicks have flourished.

### QUESTION: Have the Olympics helped or hurt taekwondo overall?

The sport of taekwondo has grown immensely in popularity since Olympic recognition. Countries that were never exposed to it now are aware of it. Taekwondo is recognized throughout the world.

There have been many positive effects, but there are also some traditional aspects and values that have changed. For many people, the goal of



training is different now. In the traditional martial arts, the aim is to perfect one's character. In sport, the aim is to become a champion. The method and the path are not necessarily emphasized because the primary focus is on the quest for victory, which sometimes is sought at any cost. This is where drugs and cheating can come into play. In sport, the goal of winning can overwhelm any moral values that are part of traditional taekwondo such as those reflected in the five tenets.

### QUESTION: Does the possibility of winning an Olympic medal in taekwondo result in more children enrolling?

It might help generate interest among children because they're able to watch talented participants in the Olympics. In the USA, however, there's not much fame or recognition because of minimal coverage of taekwondo competition by

the media. One Hollywood movie like *The Karate Kid* generates far more interest in taekwondo than sport competitions do.

### QUESTION: For children, is it better to learn traditional taekwondo or sport taekwondo?

Traditional taekwondo instills character-building traits like discipline, respect and focus. The child respects the master. In sport taekwondo, often the title of "master" is replaced with "coach." This can reflect the absence of respect and discipline.

Sport taekwondo is highly competitive, and there's only one first-place winner, one gold medalist. Second place is barely even recognized. Because of that, the sport aspect of taekwondo appeals to children with exceptional natural talents. In contrast, traditional taekwondo offers success and accomplishments for all levels of skill and natural talent.

## ART: TAEKWONDO

**EXPERT:** G.K. Lee, chief master of the American Taekwondo Association, *Black Belt*'s 2014 Instructor of the Year

**QUESTION:** Does the ATA teach primarily taekwondo for aspiring Olympians or for people who want to become proficient at self-defense?

Our main focus is traditional taekwondo — mental and physical self-defense. The ATA does not currently train members specifically for the Olympics, but we do not prohibit it.

The ATA could easily adopt an Olympic-coaching system in the future. Since 1996, we have integrated Olympic-style training into our curriculum. We have employed Olympic coaches and provided Olympic-style seminars and Olympic training camps for our instructors and students.

**QUESTION:** Has taekwondo changed since it was added to the Olympic Games in Seoul? Has it become a sport rather than a martial art?

For some, maybe. But the majority of classes are still being taught by first-generation martial artists who want to keep it traditional. At the ATA, we make certain that taekwondo is a traditional martial art that people can enjoy and practice through old age.

Taekwondo hasn't really become more popular here as a result of the Olympics. Maybe it has in small countries, where they have government support, but not in the United States. Traditional martial arts are not generally supported by governments.

**QUESTION:** Does taekwondo's inclusion in the Olympics make the art appeal more to the next generation of students?

Of course. And the ATA would like to develop a world champion or an Olympic medalist. However, we prefer to teach our young competitors that while taekwondo is a set of martial arts skills and life skills that can take them to the Olympics, it's an art that they can practice long after their competition years are over.



## ART: TAEKWONDO

**EXPERT:** Herb Perez, 1992 Olympic gold medalist, *Black Belt's* 1992 Male Co-Competitor of the Year

### QUESTION: What's your stance on the pre-1988 vs. post-1988 question?

Taekwondo has been bifurcated into disparate arts with differing expectations, goals and outcomes. The height of taekwondo as a sport was 1988, maybe with a second crest in 1992. The greatest increases in the skill sets were seen during the years leading up to Seoul and Barcelona — the best players our sport has seen were developed under the rules and objectives used in those Olympic Games.

They were creative players known for their power, speed and ability to transcend the technical parameters of the game. Techniques were rewarded based on power. They were not rewarded if they were not executed properly and with trembling shock. As a result, athletes had to commit in order to score, and they did so knowing they might be knocked out.

However, the referees were unable to keep up with the athletes, and there was a fundamental disconnect between the game underway and the results shown on the scoreboard. Spectators and the Olympic hierarchy became disenchanted with the sport and the ability of its referees to conduct fair matches. As a result, electronic scoring was implemented — prematurely.

The early versions of the electronic-scoring system were worse than the referees they replaced. The situation was exacerbated by rules that disallowed the correction of false positives. I was chairman of the Education Committee and vice chairman of the Technical Committee, which wrestled with these issues. Dr. Steven Capener and I created a multitier point system that rewarded different techniques with different points. However, it was based on well-executed techniques and power.

The intent was to create a merit-based scoring system that depended on technical and power superiority. This has been bastardized, resulting in basically a watered-down version of a bad point-karate event. In fact, I believe that a decent point-karate open-circuit fighter with a little training could win an Olympic medal in one year.

### QUESTION: Technically, what effect have the Olympics had on taekwondo?

There are three versions of taekwondo these days. One is traditional taekwondo, which focuses on fighting and training as they were done before 1992. Another is traditional taekwondo as a martial art, which is taught by most instructors who are not in the Olympic pipeline. The third is the "electronic-scoring taekwondo."

The shame for the art is that kicking is a superior method for achieving one's objectives in a fight. The shame for the sport is that kicking is a great base on which to build a competition format. Because of "electronic-scoring taekwondo," however, fewer people are focusing on developing power and properly executing techniques.



### QUESTION: With taekwondo going in three directions, how should instructors lead their students?

I own and operate four *dojang* with more than 1,800 members. We teach life-skills development through taekwondo. We believe this is the most important benefit of training. Last year, one of my students was accepted to Stanford University — that is my measure of success. 

*In Part 2, Black Belt will examine how the Olympics have affected wrestling — and how they might influence pankration and karate if they're successful in their bids to get (back) in.*

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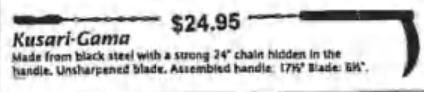
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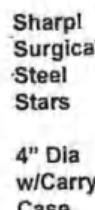
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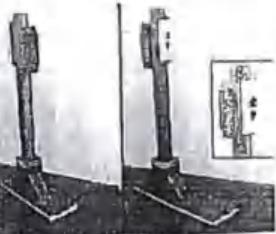
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# MIXED MARTIAL ARTS TAUGHT RIGHT!

**GREG JACKSON** — Black Belt's 2015 Instructor  
of the Year — Talks About **Holly Holm's Victory**  
Over Ronda Rousey, Teaches **Three MMA**  
**Techniques** and Is **Launching an Online Course!**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY IAN SPANIER



JACKSON'S  
MARTIAL ARTS & FITNESS ACADEMY

**TO SAY THAT GREG JACKSON HAS A LOT GOING ON** these days would be an understatement. In early November 2015, he was inducted into the Black Belt Hall of Fame as Instructor of the Year. Since November 14, he's no doubt been inundated with reporters seeking comments on the UFC 193 bout in which his fighter Holly Holm KO'd reigning champ Ronda Rousey. He's preparing to launch an online MMA course produced by Black Belt. In addition to all that, he's still manning the helm at Jackson's Martial Arts & Fitness Academy in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

We covered Jackson's Hall of Fame induction in our December 2015/January 2016 issue. Presented here are details on how he helped train Holm for her UFC bout, a look at the new streaming-video course and, just for good measure, three fighting techniques from his MMA Core curriculum.

— Editor

## ■ HOW GREG JACKSON HELPED MAKE HOLLY HOLM AN MMA STAR

Immediately after her knockout of Ronda Rousey, which won her the UFC women's bantamweight title, Holly Holm took to the microphone to explain how she was able to pull off arguably the biggest upset in mixed-martial arts history. Among her comments: "Greg Jackson is the mastermind in being able to put all this together."

But Jackson is far too humble to take all the credit for Holm's victory.

"It's probably not accurate to say that; it was a group effort," said the man many have called the best trainer

in MMA. "One of the great things about our team is we have so many talented coaches. Mr. Winkeljohn has been working with Holly since she was 16 or 17, and he's a mastermind. Every one of our coaches had a piece of this victory."

Holm began her career as a boxer and kickboxer under Jackson's partner Mike Winkeljohn and rose to become one of the best female boxers on the planet. But after winning numerous titles and with little left to accomplish in boxing, she turned her attention to MMA. While the sport's history is littered with professional boxers who flopped while trying to make that transition, Holm was far better prepared than her predeces-

sors. She'd already trained for years at Jackson and Winkeljohn's Albuquerque gym, home to many of the world's best mixed martial artists, when she changed directions.

"She'd been around us for a long time at that point, and she was an amazing athlete going in, so I thought she could be successful," Jackson said. No one outside her camp believed success would come so suddenly, but as the world now knows, Holm wound up beating the seemingly unbeatable Rousey in just her third UFC fight.

Jackson said that while they long knew Rousey was the fighter Holm would ultimately have to beat, he never thought about gearing her training specifically for Rousey until the deal was signed. There's been speculation that Holm, who was less than overwhelming in her previous UFC matches, had somehow been held back and told not to reveal too many of her skills, but Jackson scoffs at such talk.

"She hadn't shown everything she could do, but that wasn't on purpose," Jackson said. "I certainly didn't manipulate the situation like some puppet master."

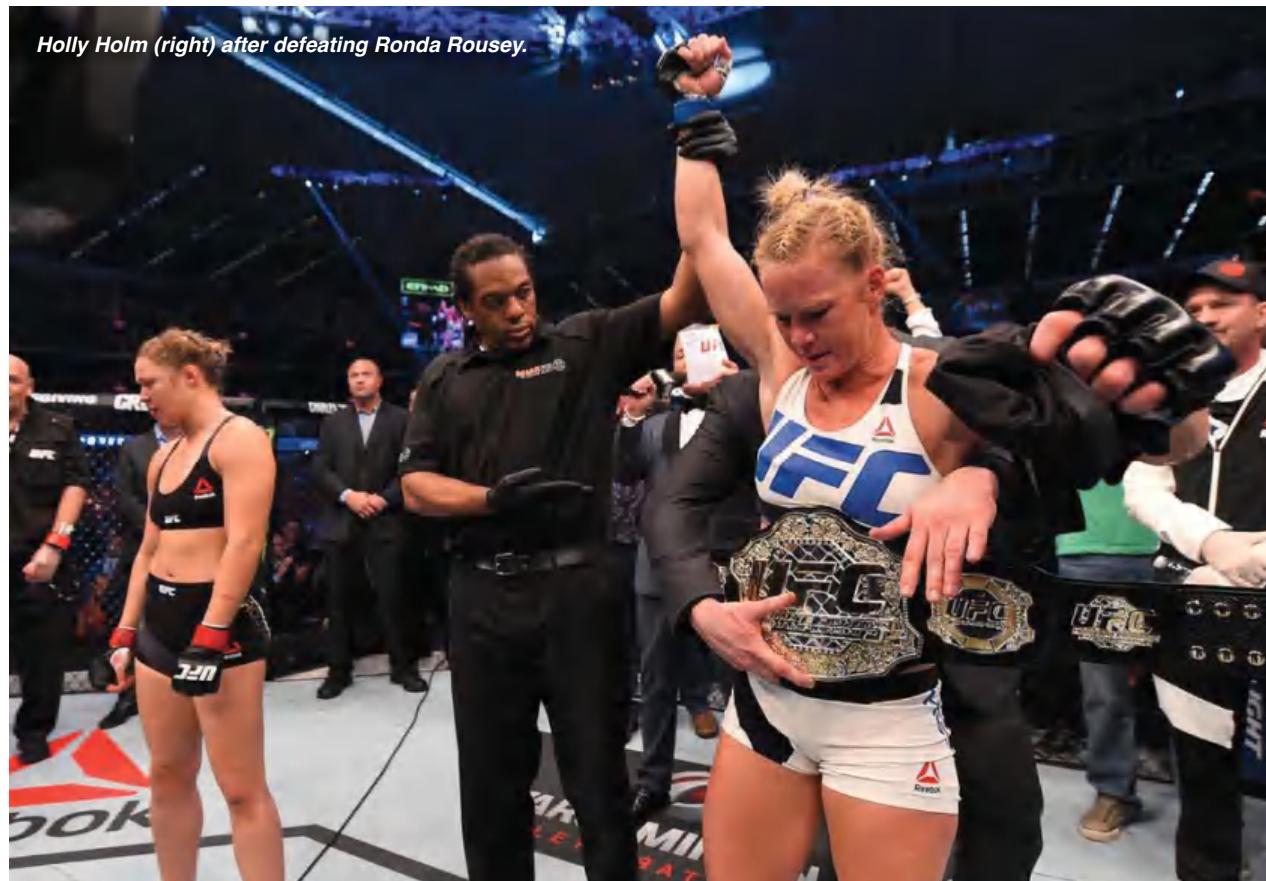


Photo by Josh Hedges/Zuffa LLC



#### OPEN A PATH FOR AN ELBOW STRIKE

Greg Jackson (left) and Joe Stevenson tie up (1). Jackson makes sure to overhook his opponent's right arm with his left limb. When Stevenson starts to reposition his left arm on the inside (2), Jackson uses his left hand to trap his opponent's left wrist (3). Grabbing the wrist with both hands (4) offers enough security for Jackson to begin his elbow strike (5). The strike comes in unobstructed (6) and lands on the jaw (7).



**MANEUVER A LIMB FOR AN ARM LOCK** Greg Jackson (top) has Joe Stevenson in side control (1). Jackson moves his right arm away from the back of the opponent's head (2) and inserts the hand on the inside of the man's elbow (3). After placing his hand on his own head, Jackson pushes down on the opponent's arm (4-5). Once the limb is down, he completes a key lock by putting his left hand over his right wrist (6-7). To apply pressure, Jackson lifts the trapped elbow (8).



What Jackson and the other coaches did do was break down videos of Rousey and pinpoint flaws in her style that no one else had been able to exploit. With a potential rematch still looming, he wouldn't go into specifics about what he saw in Rousey's game, but the overall strategy was the same one he's used to guide other MMA fighters to victory.

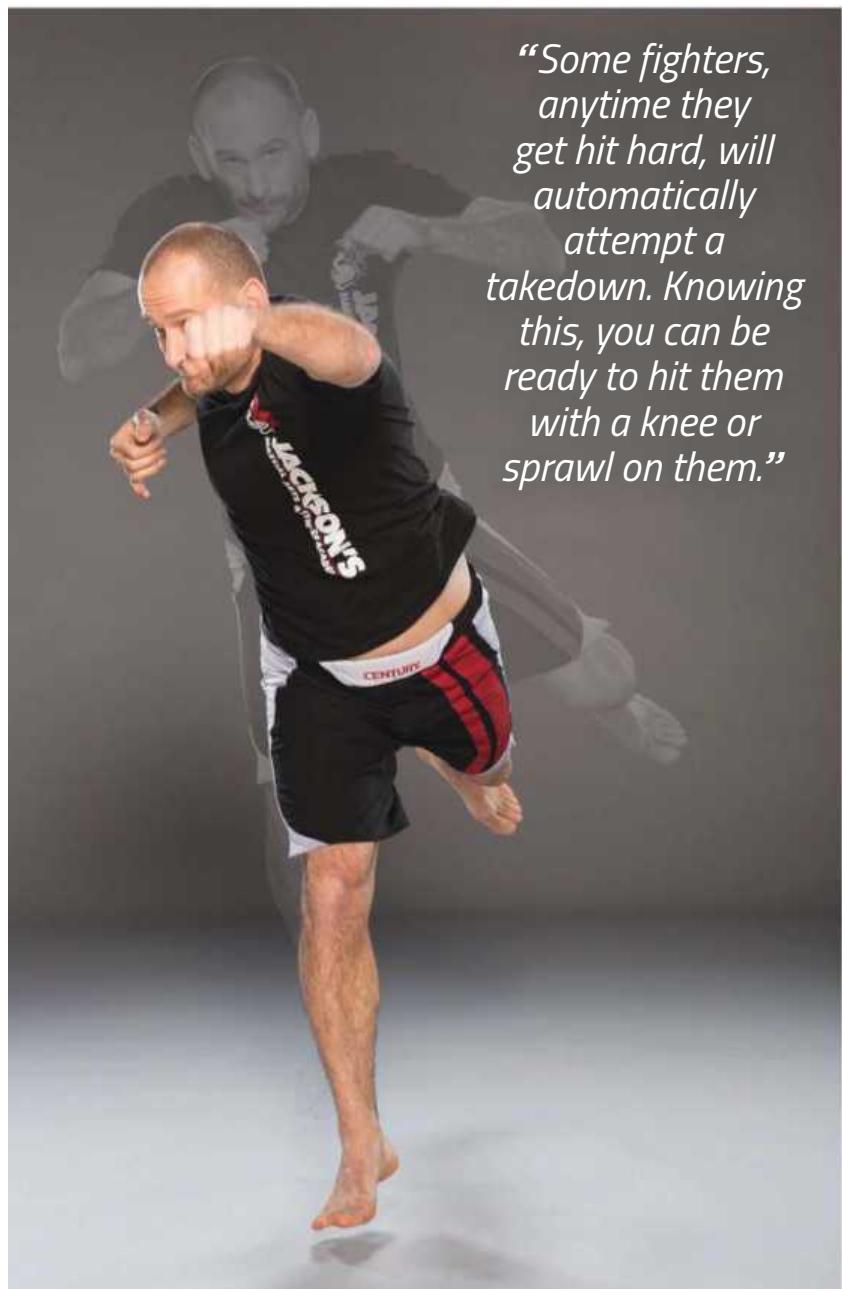
Jackson said the most important principle for one-on-one sporting combat is to identify a fighter's habits, particularly the "safety zones" he or she likes to go to whenever difficulty is encountered, and then come up with a plan to negate them.

"An example is some fighters, anytime they get hit hard, will automatically attempt a takedown," he said. "So if they get hit hard in the face, you can be pretty sure the next thing they'll do is drop for a takedown. Knowing this, you can be ready to hit them with a knee or sprawl on them."

Rousey's main safety zone has clearly been the armbar, a technique she had used to win nine of her previous 12 fights. While many ground-fighting experts will look to cautiously achieve position and soften up their opponent with strikes before going for a finishing hold, Rousey has typically eschewed this approach while aggressively seeking quick submissions. And on those occasions when she missed on her first attempt, she instantly followed up with another and then another until she finally caught her overwhelmed foe.

But unlike many of her past victims, who were willing to engage on the ground and thus give Rousey a chance to submit them, Holm is a striker who likes to keep the battle on her feet. She deftly defended against Rousey's lone armbar attempt, staying on all fours as the judo expert desperately scrambled to apply the hold. Then Holm pulled out of it and stood up, refusing to allow Rousey a second shot at the submission.

Able to keep it a striking battle almost the whole time, Holm left the formerly dominant champion looking clumsy, which led to criticism of Rousey and her corner for seeking to engage in a stand-up fight with a boxing champ. But Jackson pointed out that Rousey did attempt takedowns. He chalks up her inability to achieve them not to her fight plan but to Holm, who took away the grappler's ability to close and forced her to fight at a distance.



*"Some fighters, anytime they get hit hard, will automatically attempt a takedown. Knowing this, you can be ready to hit them with a knee or sprawl on them."*

It was southpaw Holm's movement, as much as anything, that appeared to be the key to nailing Rousey with a combination of straight left hands, elbows and side kicks before finishing her off with a high roundhouse in one of the most masterful striking displays the UFC has seen. She made Rousey look so bad that some critics began claiming the former champ was overrated all along.

Jackson said such talk is unfair to both fighters.

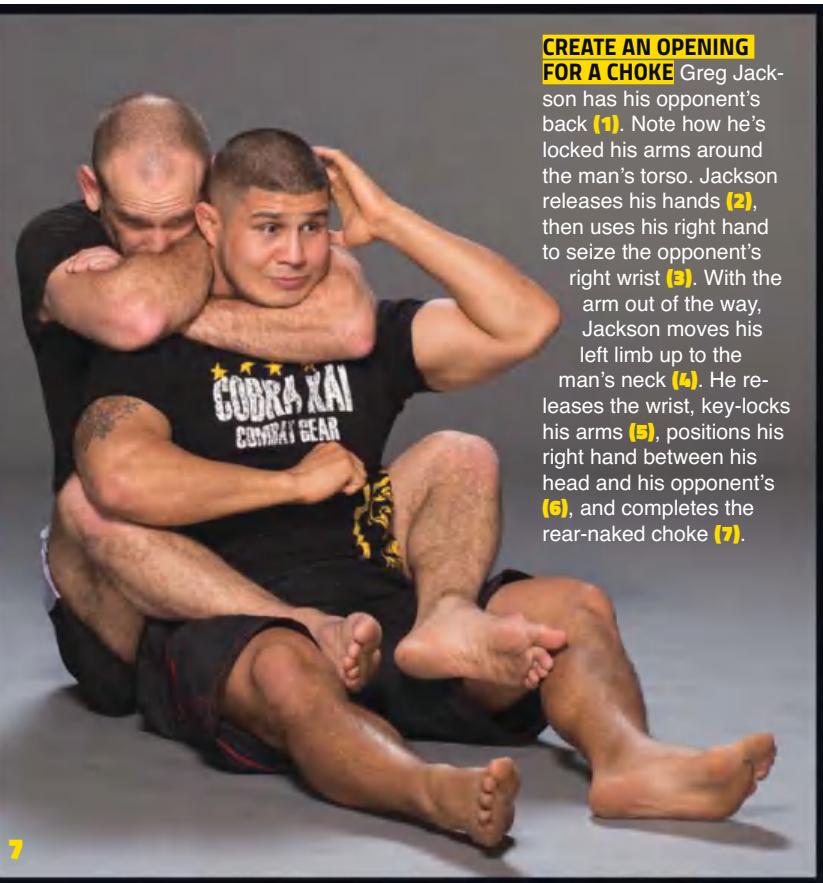
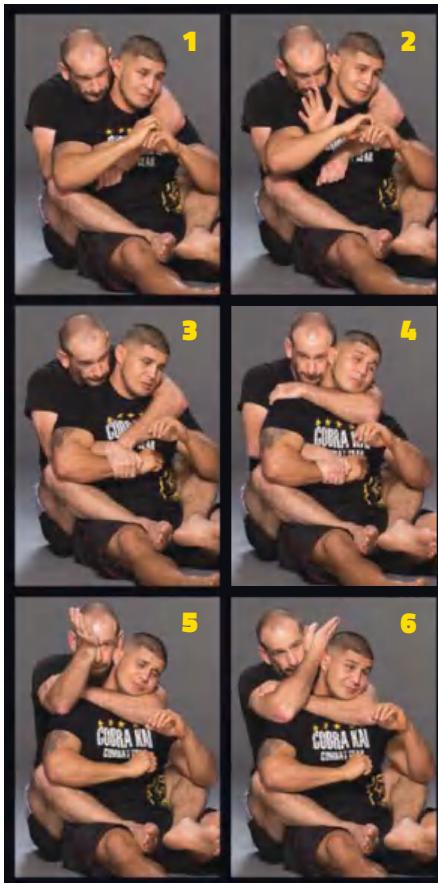
"It's a weird sports culture we have that as soon as someone falls, people want to tear them down," he said. "Rather than admiring Ronda for ev-

erything she did and admiring Holly for beating her, they have to put her down."

Jackson understands the vicissitudes of the business as well as anyone. A week after the high of Holm's victory, he was in Monterrey, Mexico, where he watched longtime disciple Diego Sanchez lose a decision in *The Ultimate Fighter: Latin America 2* finale.

"You always take the losses hard, but that's the gladiatorial battle, and we're forced to ride it out," Jackson said. "There are so many fights. Next week there will be another, and you just have to be ready for it."

— Mark Jacobs  
Contributing Editor



**CREATE AN OPENING FOR A CHOKE** Greg Jackson has his opponent's back **(1)**. Note how he's locked his arms around the man's torso. Jackson releases his hands **(2)**, then uses his right hand to seize the opponent's right wrist **(3)**. With the arm out of the way, Jackson moves his left limb up to the man's neck **(4)**. He releases the wrist, key-locks his arms **(5)**, positions his right hand between his head and his opponent's **(6)**, and completes the rear-naked choke **(7)**.

## GREG JACKSON FEATURED IN NEW ONLINE COURSE FROM BLACK BELT MAG!

As anyone who read the cover story of our June/July 2015 issue knows, Greg Jackson has developed a systematic approach to teaching mixed martial arts that parallels the one that's often used in the traditional martial arts. In other words, it's not a random sampling of techniques. It's a progression that lays a foundation of exercises, drills and basic techniques, then adds more challenging moves. It's all about taking time to build a skill base that makes sense within the confines of competition and self-defense.

We, the people who bring you *Black Belt*, managed to corral the in-demand coach in our studio, where we had a crew point three video cameras at him. After a lengthy editing session, we ended up with a polished online-education program we're calling the *Greg Jackson Mixed Martial Arts Core Curriculum*.

The advantages associated with this set of streaming-video lessons are several. First, every one features Jackson, the talented coach who's trained Holly Holm, Jon Jones, Tim Kennedy, Rashad

Evans, Frank Mir, Keith Jardine and Clay Guida, to name a few.

Second, the course uses 21<sup>st</sup>-century digital technology to beam the lessons to your smartphone, tablet or computer. That means you can learn new techniques or review the ones you already know anytime and anyplace. There are no VCRs or DVD players to lug around

and no tapes or discs to keep track of. As long as you have your digital device and an Internet connection, you're ready to throw down.

To get early-bird pricing on this cutting-edge course, go to [aimfitnessnetwork.com/blackbelt](http://aimfitnessnetwork.com/blackbelt). 

— Robert W. Young  
Editor-in-Chief

*The course uses 21<sup>st</sup>-century digital technology to beam the lessons to your smartphone, tablet or computer.*



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# Jeet Kune Do's LEG OBSTRUCTION

BY TIM TACKETT ■ PHOTOGRAPHY BY PETER LUEDERS

*This Easy-to-Learn Fighting  
Technique Can Serve You  
Well as **AN OFFENSIVE OR  
DEFENSIVE WEAPON!***

**T**he first time I saw the *jeet kune do* leg obstruction in action was in Dan Inosanto's backyard. Bruce Lee had recently left to make movies in Hong Kong, and Inosanto decided to build a private workout area at his home. I felt privileged to have been asked to join his training group when it was done.

Near the end of my first class, Inosanto told everyone to prepare for sparring. I was matched with an experienced JKD practitioner named Bob Bremer. We squared off, and after a quick exchange, Bremer nailed me with a leg obstruction. I immediately learned the hard way that when the technique is used properly, the opponent is rendered unable to kick or punch. Furthermore, the opponent can't move forward or backward because as soon as the JKD stylist drives a foot into his shin, the opponent's lead leg is immobilized — or buckled.

When the technique was used on me in Inosanto's backyard, I was helpless. At the time, it made me feel terrible because even though I was a kung fu teacher and a karate black belt, I was unable to overcome it. Now, I look back on my inability to overcome it as a sure sign of the leg obstruction's effectiveness as an offensive and defensive weapon.

## TRAINING TIME

That day, I became a believer in the JKD leg obstruction. Since then, I've seen plenty of Lee's students use the side kick to effect a similar counterattack — called the stop-kick — while avoiding their opponent's technique. However, the only person I ever saw use the leg obstruction as shown here was Bremer. He's the martial artist

who taught it to me. Had he not passed away in 2012, I'd probably still be practicing it under his tutelage.

While the stop-kick and the leg obstruction can serve basically the same purpose, my students and I have found that the leg obstruction permits a faster follow-up. See the photos for an example of how it can be used offensively in conjunction with other techniques.

How the leg obstruction fits into the JKD puzzle is worth mentioning because it can help you determine when and where to use it. Most martial artists who've trained in *jeet kune do* know that Lee divided the system's attacks into five categories: single direct attack, attack by combination, progressive indirect attack, hand-immobilization attack (trapping) and attack by drawing.

What people often overlook is that some of those attacks are meant to be used against certain types of opponents. Take the single direct attack, for example. To make it work on its own against a worthy adversary, you must be faster than he is or you must catch him off-balance.

A better way to use a single direct attack is as a counter. That often means hitting your opponent with a stop-kick or leg obstruction while he's in the middle of his forward movement. If your opponent is as fast or faster than you, this will work only from the fighting measure. The fighting measure, as you may know, is the distance between you and your opponent when you're just out of each other's reach. In other words, if he wants to kick you, he must take a step forward. It's because of that distance and the time it takes him to traverse it that you're able to detect the incoming attack and counter it.

(For more information about the fighting measure, the footwork needed to maintain it and drills that will help you master it, see Page 153 of my book *Chinatown Jeet Kune Do: Essential Elements of Bruce Lee's Martial Art*.)

After you land a single direct attack in the form of a stop-kick or leg obstruction, you can turn to JKD's other methods to finish your opponent. While trapping can be used for both of

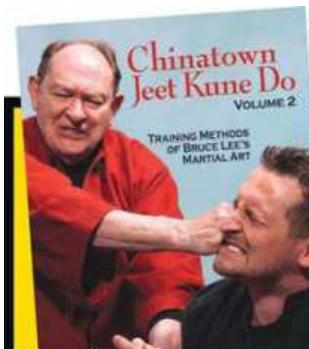
fense and defense, it's mostly used against an opponent who blocks or parries one of your techniques. Attack by drawing works by deliberately leaving an opening for your opponent to exploit — you "draw" his attack and then take advantage of the opening he gives you.

Such is the theory behind the stop-kick and leg obstruction: They work because it's impossible for anyone to effect an attack and not leave an opening.

## STRATEGIC FIGHTING

Next comes the final strategy, which is the progressive indirect attack. It's designed to work against someone who blocks an attack or uses distance as a primary means of defense. The word "progressive" in this context means moving your offensive weapon closer to the target. This is done by feinting, which enables you to progress toward the target. To better understand how this functions, you should know the difference between a feint and a fake.

A fake is an indirect attack intended to open a line by making your opponent react to a false attack. A feint is also an indirect attack intended to make the opponent react, but it doesn't withdraw. Instead, it progresses along the now-open line.



## The JKD Reading (and Watching) List

You already know that Tim Tackett is an accomplished *jeet kune do* instructor. What you might not know is that he's also a prolific writer and a video star. His most recent work comes from the people who bring you *Black Belt* magazine; all have five-star ratings on Amazon.com.

- *Chinatown Jeet Kune Do: Essential Elements of Bruce Lee's Martial Art* (book)
- *Chinatown Jeet Kune Do, Volume 2: Training Methods of Bruce Lee's Martial Art* (book)
- *Chinatown Jeet Kune Do: Essential Elements of Bruce Lee's Martial Art* (DVD set)



**STOP-KICK:** Tim Tackett (right) faces his opponent at the fighting measure (1). The man steps forward to initiate a punch, signaling Tackett to begin his stop-kick (2). Essentially a low side kick, the technique entails driving the lead foot into the knee or shin of the attacker's lead leg (3). At a minimum, the technique will stop the man's forward motion. It also can injure the leg, Tackett says.





## LEG OBSTRUCTION:

Tim Tackett (right) and his opponent square off at the fighting measure (1). Instead of sliding toward the man, Tackett elects to hop forward to save time (2). With his right shoe angled up, he slams the blade of his foot into the opponent's knee (3). Tackett's left arm is positioned in front to protect against a punch, and his shoulders are squared to make a strong base. To illustrate the fast follow-up that's possible after a leg obstruction, Tackett drops his bodyweight and traps the man's limbs with his left arm (4). He finishes with a right punch to the face (5). Additional power can be generated by hitting before your front foot touches the ground, he says.

The main problem with any fake or feint is that it shouldn't work against a JKD stylist or any other skilled counterfighter. While almost any technique or tactic will work against an opponent who isn't very good, the real test is whether it will succeed against a person with training and experience.

If your opponent is savvy enough to spot your fake or feint, he might know that it can be intercepted with a stop-kick or a stop-hit. The question then becomes, What will work against an opponent who possesses such knowledge?

Enter the defensive leg obstruction. It

entails moving from the fighting measure as quickly as possible, with little to no preparation, to create a barrier (the actual obstruction) between you and your opponent. If you can bridge the gap fast enough, he won't be able to catch you with a stop-kick or stop-hit. If you work on stop-striking enough, you'll quickly learn that if you can keep your opponent just out of reach, it's easy to intercept him with a leg obstruction anytime he takes a step forward to bridge the gap. JKD students practice this skill by putting on boxing gloves and shinguards and trying to

● **ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** Tim Tackett began training in the martial arts in 1962 when he was stationed in Taipei, Taiwan, in the U.S. Air Force. After seeing Bruce Lee in 1967 at Ed Parker's International Karate Tournament, Tackett decided to take up jeet kune do. For more information, visit [jkdwebnite.com](http://jkdwebnite.com) or [jkdtalk.com](http://jkdtalk.com).

# Leg Obstruction in Action

Jim Sewell started *jeet kune do* the second year the Chinatown JKD school was operating and wound up staying for 14 months. Like Tim Tackett, Sewell was heavily influenced by Bob Bremer.

## You've said Bob Bremer is the person who got you interested in JKD. How did the two of you meet?

Bob and I met a long time before we started JKD. He was actually with Ed Parker at that time. I went there and checked that out with him, but it wasn't for me. I dropped out but still saw Bob regularly — we fished together a lot. Later, I heard Bob talking about JKD, so I went down to the school twice. The second time I signed up.

## How was the JKD school different from the *kenpo* school?

Ed Parker's students were guys who liked to rush in and start throwing fists. That didn't fit me. After working out with Bob a little bit, JKD seemed like the right thing for me. We moved a lot, built our balance and developed fast hands. We usually started off exercising — doing push-ups and sometimes running around the block a couple of times. It was very physical.

## Did you do much sparring?

Yes, we did a lot. We had these bamboo vests that we wore. They'd split the bamboo and mount the pieces in pockets on the vest. They worked better than what we have today. They allowed us to go at it full contact, and we did.

## When you were about 65, you got a chance to put your JKD skills to use when you were attacked at a gas station. What happened?

I was in line to get gas. I filled the tank on one side of my truck, then pulled out and backed in so I could fill the tank on the other side. A guy pulled out of line and came squealing around. He said, "What the hell are you doing?" I said, "Filling my tank." Then he drove away.

me with a rear-leg straight kick. Without planning anything, I countered his kick with a leg obstruction to the knee by sliding up, then followed up with a punch to his face. He went down.

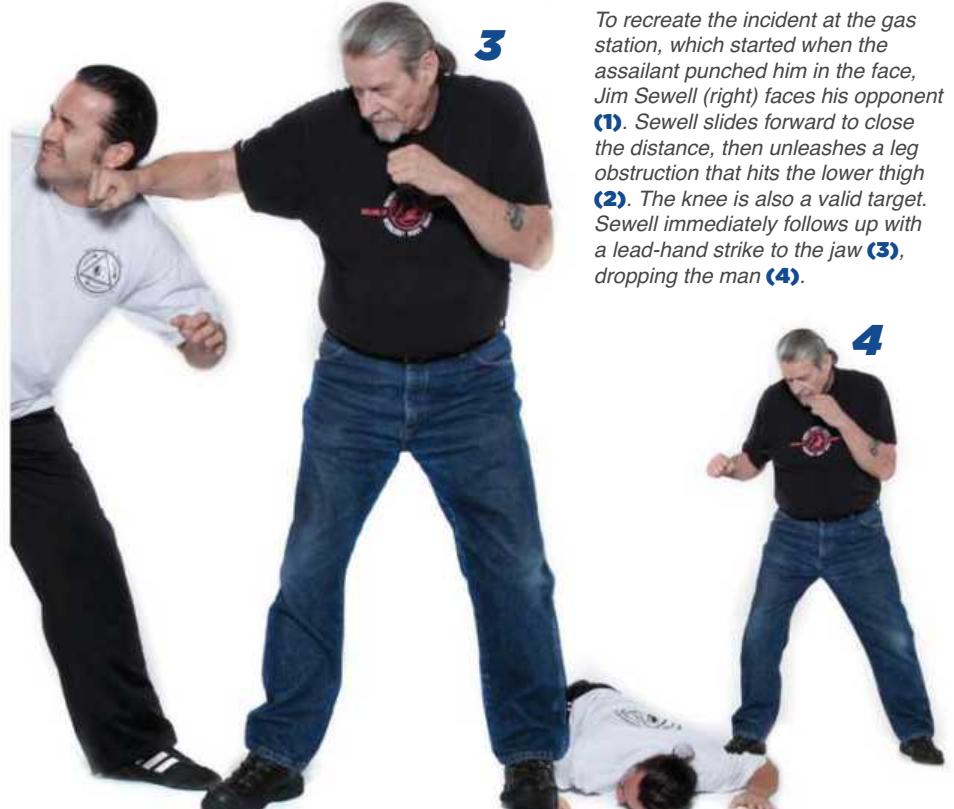
I remember thinking he was going to get up, so I went over, grabbed his arm, put it over my knee and gave it a crank. His wife came to get him, and

he was crying as they walked to their car.

Since bystanders just saw an old guy get the better of a young punk, some started to clap. A man came up and handed me my glasses. He said, "Good job." I guess I had practiced the leg obstruction so many times in the 1960s that I just seemed to do it without thinking about it.



To recreate the incident at the gas station, which started when the assailant punched him in the face, Jim Sewell (right) faces his opponent (1). Sewell slides forward to close the distance, then unleashes a leg obstruction that hits the lower thigh (2). The knee is also a valid target. Sewell immediately follows up with a lead-hand strike to the jaw (3), dropping the man (4).



# THREAT ASSESSMENT

## 8 SELF-DEFENSE HAZARDS YOU NEED TO PREPARE FOR NOW!

by Robert Bussey

**E**ven though most martial artists dedicate themselves to learning practical responses to modern threats, violence can take unexpected turns that shock even the best technician. To develop the kind of mental and physical resolve necessary to prevail in such encounters, you must create a variety of worst-case scenarios so you can build relevant skill sets that can be put into action quickly.

If you already engage in scenario training, you should take a hard look at the ones you currently use and examine without style prejudice which moves will work when there's hard contact and full resistance. You may find that some "proven techniques" are fatally flawed when your opponent is fighting back. Obviously, you can't go ballistic with your training partner, but you can take into account the natural reactions that would be associated with real violence.

Presented here are eight threat categories that all serious students of self-defense should prepare for.



Photos Courtesy of Robert Bussey



## 1 FIST ATTACKS

In a street fight, the hand techniques most frequently seen are primary strikes delivered in basic combinations. Straight punches are the staples, and they're often backed up by a cross or hook. Punches tend to be pumped out in a piston-like fashion using the same hand or alternating hands. The danger has more to do with timing, distance and force than it does with technique.

Obviously, there are attacks that involve uppercuts, spinning backfists and so on, but in general, the most common fist strikes are the jab, cross and haymaker. They may be thrown individually or in combinations, but the limb never remains extended or static. In other words, you'll need to practice against punches that are thrown and then quickly retracted.

Defending against them is not as difficult as you might think because of all the choices you have, which include altering range, evading, blocking, deflecting and covering up. No matter which you choose, follow up with a strike or takedown to interrupt your opponent's momentum and rhythm.

A single blow can be stopped by an average martial artist, but things are more difficult when punches are thrown in combination. I call this the "flurry factor." When defending against such a barrage, blocking each punch becomes nearly impossible. What is possible is to deflect the first, the second and possibly the third punch and then alter the range. If you haven't committed to an effective counter-

measure by that point, your foe likely will penetrate your defenses.

Always remember that discomfort can change the direction of any fight. The sudden jolt of an impact and the resulting pain can shift things — in your favor or in your attacker's.

## 2 TAKEDOWNS

We all know how quickly one person can take another person down. This is why so many martial artists are adding MMA ground techniques to their arsenal. We also know how dangerous a ground fight can be, especially when multiple opponents or weapons are involved. A recent national news story drove home this point when it showed video footage of a fight between two young men that ended on the ground. As onlookers cheered, a gang member emerged from the crowd and stabbed one of the men, killing him on the spot.

This serves as a valuable reminder that no matter how proficient you are on the ground, you must remain alert. You also must understand which positions offer advantages to you and which do that for your opponent. If you're smart, you'll learn a few tricks that can give you the edge on the ground.

If you've studied grappling, you know the nuances of ground fighting. They include how to prevent the mount, how to execute a takedown, how to apply a submission and how to finish with a choke. Consider bolstering that toolbox with biting, hair pulling, eye gouging and the use of makeshift weapons such as car keys and found weapons such as rocks. Don't neglect throwing a second attacker into the training mix to see how the dynamics change.

## 3 HANDS-ON ASSAULTS

Anytime an opponent grabs you, it's considered a "hands-on assault." Examples include a head lock, front choke, bear hug, lapel grab and shove. Your response to any of these should be fast, direct and uncomplicated. A counterstrike is usually in order, and that can set up a sweep or takedown. Your adversary must not be given a chance to recover, so either inflict a shocking blow or effect a grappling technique that renders him unable to continue. Of course, these options should be used only when there's no chance of defusing the aggression.

Sometimes you can prevent a hands-on assault simply by deflecting or re-

sisting in a natural way. It's for situations in which that's not possible that you'll need to train. First, learn the most common assaults and practice proven methods for dealing with them. Next, get comfortable with two or three defensive options that work effectively against each threat. Make sure your chosen countermeasures work on people who are noncompliant.

## 4 MULTIPLE OPPONENTS

Many street encounters involve multiple attackers. Because the average martial artist isn't used to fighting more than one person at a time, the martial artist can be easily overpowered. It might be because the defender turns his back on his enemies. It might be because he goes to the ground. The lesson to be learned is that you need to stay on your feet and not turn your back on any opponent. As soon as possible, use the element of surprise to take out the person who stands between you and your best exit.

One method I teach for battling multiple opponents is "aligning." It involves continually positioning yourself so your attackers are in a line. That way, you don't have to face them all at once. For example, if you can maneuver so enemy B is behind enemy A, it forces B to come around his own man to get to you.

With practice, this tactic can work against three or more people. It's best achieved by first executing a surprise attack against one adversary and using his body as a temporary barrier between yourself and the others. As they begin to flank you, the man who's now the nearest is struck hard and used as a shield.

For whatever reason, a mass attack usually de-escalates after the first two or three opponents are defeated. In other words, if you're facing six people, you may end up fighting only two of the boldest. Of course, when facing multiple attackers, you should always try using verbal techniques to keep the situation from spiraling out of control in the first place, but that doesn't always work.

## 5 THIRD PARTY IN DANGER

At one time or another, you may need to come to the aid of someone who's in danger. Numerous situations might warrant such an intervention — it could be an ordinary mugging on the street or a terrorism-related crime.

In most cases, you'll approach from the assailant's blind side and use the element of surprise. That could entail taking him down by pulling his hair or jacket while kicking or kneeing the back of his knee, executing a "septum takedown" in which you apply pressure under his nose with your hand, or seizing control of the weapon while he's focused on his hostage.

People will often refrain from intervening in a violent incident involving others because they fear being hurt or killed. And that's fine because, as they say, the better part of valor is discretion. However, knowing what action to take is crucial for those situations when restraint isn't an option.

## 6 BLUDGEONS

From a defensive perspective, you need to know how to stop a stick attack and, when possible, disarm the attacker. From an offensive perspective, you also should know how to use a stick — it can be a great equalizer. That means learning how to strike vital areas and learning how to use one to apply pressure to a body part or amplify leverage.

To accomplish the former, it's best if you know how to position yourself to deflect the danger. Of course, you also need to know how to enter, control the weapon and effect a disarm. To accomplish the latter, you'll need to polish your ability to maneuver into or out of several stances that have you holding the stick in a manner that doesn't allow your enemy to snatch it out of your hand. Next, you'll need to work on striking the knees, collarbone and other prime targets that happen to be available. Example: Your opponent is holding a knife, and you have a stick. You'll want to target his weapon hand.

Higher-level stick fighting revolves around manipulating your opponent's



body using pressure and leverage. By sandwiching body parts between the stick and your own body, you can inflict substantial pain, perhaps enough to momentarily debilitate him. Such "wedge locks" can target bones, joints and nerves.

## 7 EDGED WEAPONS

Blades are dangerous because even an untrained person can cut you to the bone with a single slash. Likewise, a person can inflict a deep stab wound with very little power and no real technique. No matter how big or strong you are, a minimally trained person with a blade can bring you down with a single movement of his arm.

Unfortunately, defensive techniques that work in theory don't always work in reality when resistance and bad intent are part of the equation. This is why range is crucial in knife defense. Stay out of range whenever possible. When you need to get close enough to control the weapon and disarm the person, maintain awareness of the blade at all times. Evasive maneuvers such as leaning away and hollowing out can thwart blade-to-body contact but only momentarily.

When the assailant is savvy enough

to use stabs and slashes in quick combinations, he can defeat even someone who's skilled at self-defense. One key to stopping this kind of attack is countering with one or two quick strikes and then altering the range by moving outside or inside his attack. Moving outside is easier. Moving inside requires courage and the ability to smother his attempts to counter your entry. From there, a takedown or disarm must be done quickly and followed by a submission or a knockout.

## 8 FIREARMS

Disarming a gunman is a risky proposition, one that should be attempted only if a life is on the line. It is possible, however, to take a gun away from an assailant when conditions are favorable and your technique and timing are spot on.

Distance is paramount in gun defense. Simply put, you must be close enough to get your hands on the enemy before he can shoot. He won't let you take his weapon, so it's essential that you're prepared to deal with the inevitable retraction of the weapon arm. That means practicing gun disarms while working against resistance. The best moves are those that follow the retracting limb of the assailant and seek to "consume" him before stripping the weapon from his grasp.

Technically, it's preferable to work against the thumb of the hand that's gripping the firearm. If you need proof of concept, try to hold something securely without using your thumb. You'll find out just how weak the human hand can be.

Preparing for what typically occurs in self-defense situations such as the ones described above will make you better-equipped to deal with any threat you face. It will minimize your response time. It will teach you to stay true to the code of readiness, which ultimately brings you closer to taking action. This reduces the chance that you'll panic because you'll be operating under circumstances similar to the scenarios that you've prepared for. ☀

● **ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** Robert Bussey has devoted his life to promoting no-rules combat and self-preservation. After pioneering the ninja arts in the United States in the late 1970s, he created the RBWI organization. Today, he serves as CEO of Robert Bussey & Associates. [robertbussey.com](http://robertbussey.com)



## HOW TO HALT A HAYMAKER

Many street encounters start with a verbal exchange, then quickly escalate until the aggressor fires a haymaker punch at the other person. If the attack is thrown at close range, it's often best to block the arm or duck under the blow. If it's fired from arm's length, you might be better off evading it. In either case, counter before your opponent has time to follow up. An elbow strike to the face and knee to the groin are effective because they can set up a takedown. Finish with punches before separating from the action.

## SHOULD YOU STRIKE FIRST?

Sometimes the best option in a self-defense situation is to strike first. Veteran street fighters will tell you that the man who gets in the first shot has the best chance of winning. There's little doubt that an initial shot can alter the direction of a fight — and sometimes end it.

Because threats often precede an attack, it's important to watch for red flags. They include the aggressor clenching his fists, gritting his teeth and puffing out his chest. Any of them likely means that he's preparing to unleash a punch — and that you need to ready yourself to defend against whatever comes your way or initiate a first strike. If going on the offensive is your choice, think "closest weapon, closest target."

Example: An enemy has invaded your space and is almost nose to nose with you. The best response on your part might be a head butt, followed by a knee to the groin and right cross to the jaw.

In any situation that warrants a first strike, I recommend leading with a distraction. The element of surprise can be a powerful ally. You might look over your adversary's shoulder and say, "Oh, you're just in time for the party!" As soon as he looks, unload your power strike and quickly transition to your finishing move.





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# FRANKLY SPEAKING

**SAN-JITSU FOUNDER FRANK SANCHEZ HAS FOUGHT THE ESTABLISHMENT TO SPREAD GUAM'S SELF-DEFENSE SYSTEM AND PROMOTE MARTIAL ARTS BROTHERHOOD! ≈ BY FLOYD BURK**

**FRANK E. SANCHEZ** has been around the block. As a youth in Guam, the U.S. territory in which he was born, he frequently had to call on his martial arts skills to deal with local ruffians.

"When I was young, nothing pleased me more than a good brawl," he wrote in *Black Belt*. "More often than not, it was at close quarters with someone who used only his hands — kicking was considered sissy stuff at the time because the Asian arts weren't widely known. It was relatively easy to overpower such an adversary using hand and foot techniques."

Sanchez's growing proficiency gained him a reputation as a formidable fighter. He wasn't always scrapping, however. Often, he could be found singing. Using the stage name Frankie Sanchez — get it? — he recorded a number of regional tunes, including *Do You Remember*

*Guam and Guam, Beautiful Island*. Both songs are listed in Guampedia, an online resource that also mentions Sanchez as one of the island's best-known people.

In 1971 Sanchez pooled all his knowledge and experience and created a hardcore self-defense system that he dubbed *san-jitsu*. Composed of strikes, gouges, bone-breaking techniques, takedowns and weapons skills, it's defined in *San-Jitsu: The New Devastating Fighting Art of the Marianas*, a book Sanchez wrote in 1976. The same year, his growing celebrity compelled Guam's governor Ricardo J. Bordallo to make him an honorary ambassador-at-large for the island.

Since the style's unveiling, it's been featured in *Black Belt* on numerous occasions. "San-jitsu is a compilation of the arts I studied, namely *danzan-ryu jujitsu*, *judo*, *American karate* and *jing*

*jow pai* kung fu," said Sanchez, now 67. To that martial arts amalgam he added boxing, which he learned from his father Francisco C. Sanchez, a pugilist with the U.S. Pacific Fleet.

#### TROUBLE BREWS

If you're thinking Sanchez was on a fast track to martial arts success, think again. Back in those days, people who created their own fighting system often got a lot of guff from the establishment. "I had no problems in Guam as I was a public figure at the time," Sanchez said. "I mixed with a rough crowd, and my uncles were all politicians. But with a good reputation for fighting and with the political backing of my uncles, I guess I was in the middle of a perfect storm."

In 1981 that storm went from Category nothing to Category 3 when Sanchez and his family relocated to Jack-



Frank Sanchez (left) created the World Head of Family Sokeship Council to bring recognition to senior martial artists who found their own systems no matter their country of origin.



Having a father who boxed meant that Frank Sanchez was destined to learn effective striking and later to incorporate it into his art of san-jitsu.



sonville, Florida, and set up a *dojo*. In short order, he started receiving challenges from people who were looking for a chance to make a name for themselves by demonstrating the superiority of their art. In most cases, once those thugs discovered that their intended prey was an experienced street fighter who wasn't about to be bullied, the challenges faded away.

That was only the beginning, however. Stronger winds began blowing when Sanchez founded the World Head of Family Sokeship Council in 1992.

#### SITUATION WORSENS

Sanchez got his feet wet in the can't-we-all-just-get-along world of multi-style organizations when he founded the American Martial Arts Association in 1991. In response to its rapid expansion, he renamed it the American Martial Arts Alliance. When it went international, Sanchez knew it was time to pull the plug on the name and think global. Which is when his detractors resurfaced.

"It was a natural step from there to start an organization of founders, inheritors and grandmasters, which I did with the World Head of Family Sokeship Council," Sanchez said. "But there was major pushback from a group of martial artists from New York and New Jersey at the beginning of the council's existence. Apparently, they felt that

someone from Guam shouldn't be running a U.S.-based grandmasters organization. It was a little misguided since Guam is actually a U.S. territory."

During those turbulent times, Sanchez regularly received phone calls and faxes urging him to "go home and pick coconuts," he said. "Or they would say, 'Bury yourself deep so that the stink doesn't rise to the surface,' and 'Stay on your throne in Florida and never come to our area — for your own good!' This alarmed my wife, but it made me even more determined to build my organization."

The last straw came in the form of a fax that urged him to attend a tournament in New Jersey, where Sanchez assumed his adversaries would be waiting. Never one to shy away from a challenge, Sanchez packed his bags and went.

"I waited all day long in an empty part of the bleachers to entice my antagonists to approach me," he said. "Nothing happened while I was at the tournament, but I did see some tough guys who were probably those who had been threatening me — they were leaving early. I left New Jersey, satisfied that I had faced down my enemies."

#### TRADITIONALISTS CAPITULATE

Even though some practitioners of orthodox arts disapproved of the WHFSC — after all, it offered recognition to the movers and shakers of styles they

regarded as competitors — Sanchez wasn't about to be deterred. He knew getting martial artists accustomed to using the word *soke*, especially when referring to others, would be an uphill battle. But he also knew that some big names in the traditional arts were coming on board.

"It took people awhile to get over our using 'soke,' but it's simply a Japanese word that means 'head of something,' Sanchez said. "There's nothing nationalistic about a word like that, whether it's Japanese, American or Swedish."

Certainly, the WHFSC includes members who are Japanese, practice Japanese arts and thus fit into the Japanese *soke* category. They include Masaaki Hatsumi, Seiyo Oyata, Keido Yamaue and Masa-toshi Oshiro. However, it also encompasses luminaries from non-Japanese arts who wouldn't otherwise use the title — but who aren't afraid of it, either.

One of my earliest recollections of Sanchez's pet project of martial arts brotherhood involves my teacher George Owens, and it encapsulates the way our culture has evolved. In the early 1990s, Owens announced he was planning to attend a "big event down in Florida organized by a guy named Frank Sanchez." The next time I visited my *sensei*, I found a plaque bearing the WHFSC logo on the wall. Owens still talks about how he supports its mission, and he isn't spewing empty



▲ The numerous street fights in which Frank Sanchez engaged as a youth forced him to focus his system on reality-based self-defense.

praise: The rank certificate he gave me after my next promotion bore a big WHFSC seal.

#### LESSONS SPREAD

Sanchez gained such fame — and notoriety — for standing up to his enemies that he was commissioned to create an article about his experiences for *Black Belt*. Ironically, it was in rebuttal to a story I wrote titled “The Dangers of Creating Your Own Martial Art,” which ran in the September 1995 issue.

“I did an article for *Black Belt* titled ‘What’s Wrong With a Martial Artist Creating His Own System? In Defense of Eclectic Martial Arts’ that appeared in the November 1996 issue,” Sanchez said. “It mentioned Wally Jay, Remy Presas and Bill Wallace — all members of the WHFSC, by the way — as examples of people who started their own arts. The words I used at the end of the piece went something like this: ‘In reality, the current trend toward eclectic arts is only a repeat of history, when the so-called traditional arts were the eclectic systems of their day, just as today’s eclectic styles are the traditional systems of tomorrow.’”

Many would agree that Sanchez’s piece, along with his long history in the arts, helped open the door for other accomplished masters who would choose the path of soke.

The ongoing mission of the WHFSC is



◀ In the September 1995 issue of *Black Belt*, Floyd Burk wrote about the dangers of creating your own martial art.



◀ In the November 1996 issue, Frank Sanchez penned a rebuttal to the Floyd Burk article.

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## 4 SAN-JITSU SELF-DEFENSE STRATEGIES FOR BEATING BIGGER OPPONENTS

**Stay Flexible:** One principle of *san-jitsu* that’s taught in conjunction with fighting a larger opponent is to stay mentally flexible while you’re fighting at a distance. If you cannot lunge forward to reach a specific target such as your attacker’s nose, abandon it and aim for a more accessible one. **Attack the Closest Target:** It might be a hand, a foot or a leg — it doesn’t matter. Often the best option is to use a pressure-point strike or a joint lock. When your opponent punches or kicks, hit the striking appendage with your elbow. If he assumes a fighting stance, attack his lead leg to disable it. Once he’s wounded, target his body or head to end the altercation.

**Use the Clinch to Gain Control:** If you decide to fight at close range, rush forward and wrap your arms around him so your chest is flat against his. That positions you so close to him that he cannot effectively strike you, and it affords you good control of his balance. To protect yourself, ensure that your groin and head are tucked to the side or back of him. Once you establish the clinch, follow up with a hand technique, foot technique or takedown.

**Recognize Opportunity:** This means exploiting any opening you detect in your adversary’s defenses. That can entail picking up an improvised weapon or finding an escape path. The opportunity to catch an opponent by surprise might involve concealing until the last possible minute your knowledge of the martial arts.

— Frank E. Sanchez

to recognize legitimate martial arts that, although they may not be hundreds of years old, are showing signs that they, too, will withstand the test of time, Sanchez said. “We’re talking about founders who are older, have a significant student count and teach an art that’s been in existence for a number of years. It’s not about youngsters who form a system in their room after zero years in the arts and have no students.”

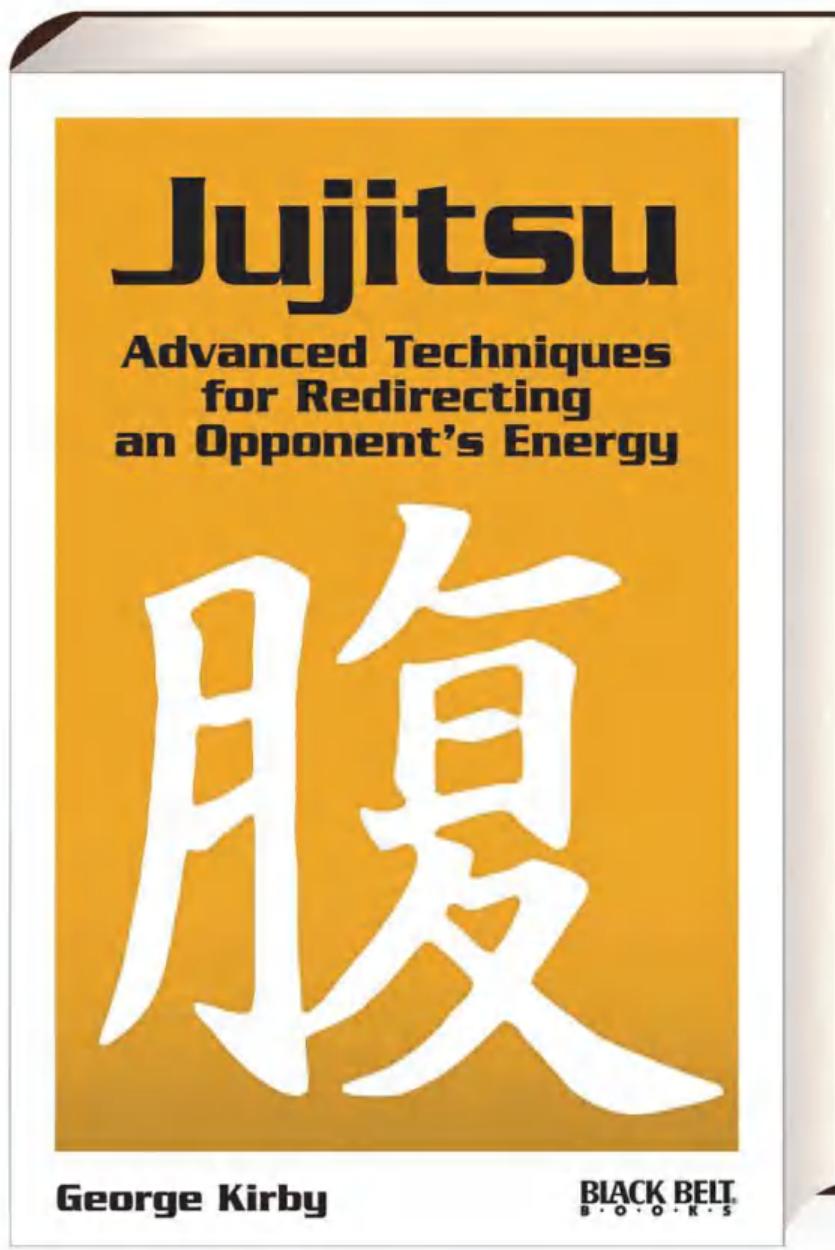
Through the WHFSC, Sanchez provides an apolitical support system for the martial arts. “It also offers a way to network and share knowledge,” he said. “It highlights the personal accomplishments of each individual. We have an annual meeting that encompasses seminars from our members and an awards function.”

No matter what his detractors say, Sanchez is doing good work in our world. The World Head of Family Sokeship Council’s current tally of 293 members, many of whom are spread around the world, reads like a who’s who of the martial arts. And the fact that it’s growing says a lot about how the community has come to view Frank Sanchez and his mission. ☘

● **ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** Floyd Burk is a San Diego-based 10<sup>th</sup>-degree black belt with more than 40 years of experience in the arts. He’s senior adviser to Independent Karate Schools of America. For more information about Frank Sanchez, visit [whfsc.com](http://whfsc.com).

# Learn to use the momentum of an attack to your advantage!

George Kirby's latest offering from Black Belt Books, *Jujitsu: Advanced Techniques for Redirecting an Opponent's Energy*, addresses the theory and application of how to redirect the momentum and energy of an opponent's attack. Whether you are a student of *jujitsu*, *aikido*, *judo*, *karate* or any other martial art, this is a must-have book for helping you connect the dots between concepts and actions.



Through extensive discussions and detailed photographs and diagrams, Kirby, a 10th-degree black belt who has taught *jujitsu* since 1967, describes the following:

- how to apply circular movement, balance and momentum to execute martial arts techniques quickly and effectively with minimal effort
- how to maintain your *saiki tandem* (center) in an attack
- how to use an attacker's momentum against him in devastating fashion through appropriate application of his and your *ki* (energy) and *kuzushi* (off-balancing)
- and so much more!

Professor Kirby is an internationally recognized martial arts instructor who has led seminars throughout the United States, Canada, Europe and Israel, and he is also the founder of the Budoshin Ju-Jitsu Yudanshakai, an educational foundation. Kirby was awarded the title of *hanshi* in 1997, his 10th-degree grade in 2000 and was named *Black Belt's* 2007 Instructor of the Year.

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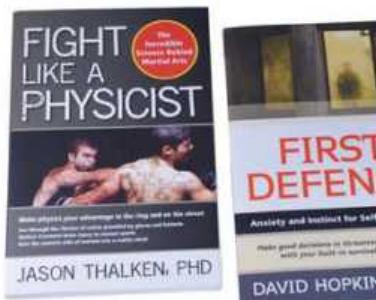


## TRIBUTE JIU-JITSU GI

The 96 Especial Jiu-Jitsu Gi is a tribute to Brazilian *jiu-jitsu* legend Ricardo Liborio's victory at the inaugural IBJJF World Championship in 1996. He became the first world BJJ champion, despite the fact that he was competing in a weight division above his own. Century collaborated with Liborio to create this *gi* and make it suitable for future champions.

**\$130**

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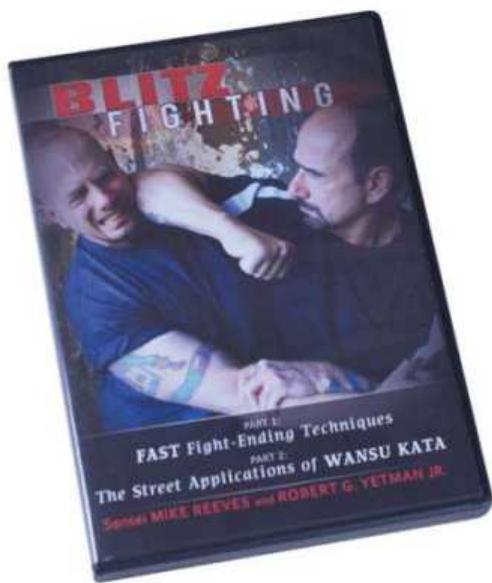


## 2 BOOKS BY PH.D.S

YMAA has released a pair of martial arts books by Ph.D.s. The first, titled *Fight Like a Physicist*, is written by Jason Thalken, a *hapkido* black belt. Its 161 pages contain chapters devoted to, among other things, the science behind martial arts strikes and martial arts injuries. The second book, called *First Defense*, comes from David Hopkins, a *krav maga* authority in Germany. The 177-pager deals with much more than fighting. The author delves into subjects such as anxiety, instinct, sensory input, women and children, and preparedness.

**\$17 (PHYSICIST), \$19 (DEFENSE)**

[YMMA.COM](http://YMMA.COM)



## BLITZFIGHTING DVD

Mike Reeves, a 10-time ISKA champion and seventh dan in *ishin-ryu* karate, and Robert G. Yetman Jr., an ISSA-certified specialist in martial arts conditioning, joined forces to create this 50-minute program called *BlitzFighting*. It's composed of two parts: Fast Fighting-Ending Techniques, which teaches speed development, and Street Applications of Wansu Karate, which concentrates on *bunkai*.

**\$25**

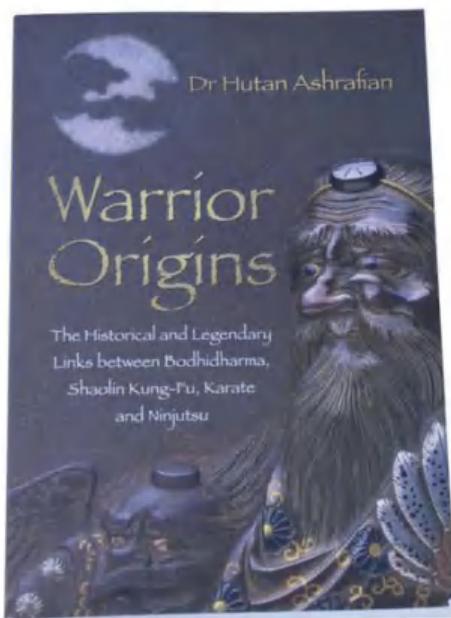
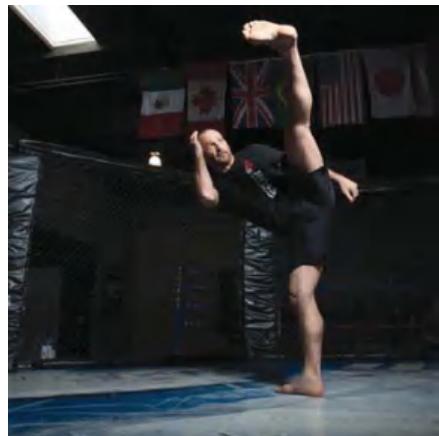
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## GREG JACKSON MIXED MARTIAL ARTS COURSE

*Black Belt*'s 2015 Instructor of the Year has committed the first part of his acclaimed MMA program to video, and the people who bring you *Black Belt* have transformed it into an online course you can access via any smartphone, tablet or computer. Unlike other courses, the *Greg Jackson Mixed Martial Arts Core Curriculum* teaches techniques in a logical progression so anyone can get up to speed on the essentials that are needed for competition and self-defense.

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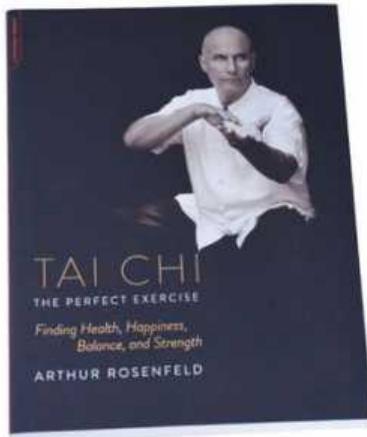


## WARRIOR ORIGINS

Subtitled *The Historical and Legendary Links Between Bodhidharma, Shaolin Kung-Fu, Karate and Ninjutsu*, this book connects the dots with respect to some of Asia's most fascinating martial cultures. Written by Dr. Hutan Ashrafian, the 223-page text traverses the Silk Road as it explores the historical arts of China, Japan and Persia.

**\$20**

**THEHISTORYPRESS.CO.UK**



## TAI CHI: THE PERFECT EXERCISE

This book from Arthur Rosenfeld aims to help the reader find health, happiness, balance and strength through practice of the Chinese martial art. In its 238 pages, the author addresses relaxing, rooting, being mindful, breathing and being sensitive.

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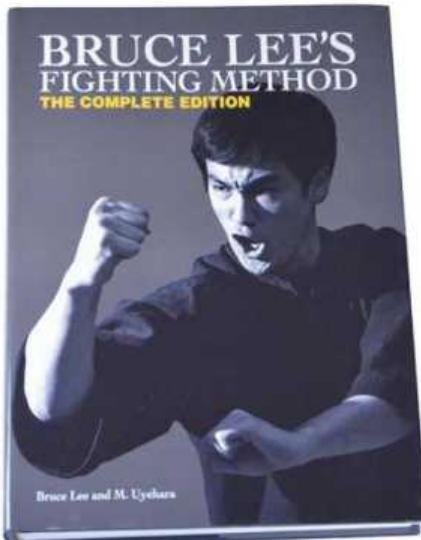
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Hayabusa recently introduced the Ultimate Karate Collection. It includes everything a serious practitioner needs: professional-grade sparring gloves, shin protectors and footpads, as well as uniforms that are designed for competition and training. There's even one uniform that's been called the world's finest *gi*.

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## BRUCE LEE'S FIGHTING METHOD: THE COMPLETE EDITION

Since their rerelease as *Bruce Lee's Fighting Method: The Complete Edition*, the four volumes from the founder of *jeet kune do* have taken on a new life for a new generation of martial artists. The hardcover book features digitally remastered photos of Lee, a chapter by Ted Wong and an introduction by Shannon Lee. It's the perfect complement to the *Tao of Jeet Kune Do*.

**\$35**

[AMAZON.COM](http://AMAZON.COM)

## KELLY MCCANN ONLINE COMBATIVES COURSE

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## With Markel, the Success of Your Dojo Is Insured

by Floyd Burk

If you own a martial arts school, operate a club or run a program in a local parks-and-rec facility, you need insurance. It's as simple as that. The right insurance coverage will keep you from having to stay up at night, worrying about the possibility of losing your assets should an accident happen. Ask anyone who's been there — all it takes is a single claim that stems from a student landing a punch with a little too much power, and your whole business can come crashing down.

Insurance, as they say, is part of the cost of doing business in 21<sup>st</sup>-century America. Thankfully, companies like Markel can make it easy to obtain the coverage your martial arts business needs.

**BASED IN RICHMOND**, Virginia, Markel was founded in the 1920s. It began serving the martial arts industry in 1989. During the quarter century that followed, it homed in on precisely the types of coverage *dojo* owners want and need. In fact, that notion is reflected in one of Markel's mottos: We know your risks.

"We offer insurance coverage for injuries to participants or business guests," said Michael Swain, senior loss-control specialist for Markel. "Injuries can occur from use of equipment or from simply maintaining a business owner's premises."

Markel provides policies that cover other contingencies, including alle-

gations of child abuse, accidents and property damage.

A crucial component of the company's business model involves the preemptive strike known as education. Markel makes available to all its clients risk-management educational resources, newsletters and safety guides. It can conduct premises surveys to identify potential hazards, and it can arrange comprehensive background checks, which are essential whenever you're hiring someone who will have access to and authority over children.

**OBTAINING COVERAGE** for your martial arts school begins with a phone call or a visit with an insurance agent.

"Having the proper coverage is very important for any type of business, so you should discuss all your risks, both business and personal, with your agent," Swain said. "Review your specific operations and coverage needs to determine the best protection for your business."

If you find yourself in need of a special policy to cover a tournament, seminar or training camp, there's likely no need to shop elsewhere. "Coverage for these events can be requested by submitting supplement applications," Swain said. "Someone will determine if your coverage can be extended."

**PERHAPS THE MOST** comforting part of doing business with Markel is knowing that you get access to a team of insurance experts. One of them is managing executive Alex Martin. An employee since 2006, he's been a martial artist for more than 20 years. His training started with karate and *kendo* but expanded to include *muay Thai* and Brazilian *jiu-jitsu*. He even competes in regional BJJ tournaments.

You can be certain that when a company as detail-oriented as Markel becomes a leader in martial arts insurance, it's due in large part to input from insiders like Martin. You also can be certain that Markel's familiarity with our industry makes the company a logical choice when you need coverage. **JK**

*For more information, call (800) 866-7403. An online application can be found at [martialartsinsurance.com](http://martialartsinsurance.com).*

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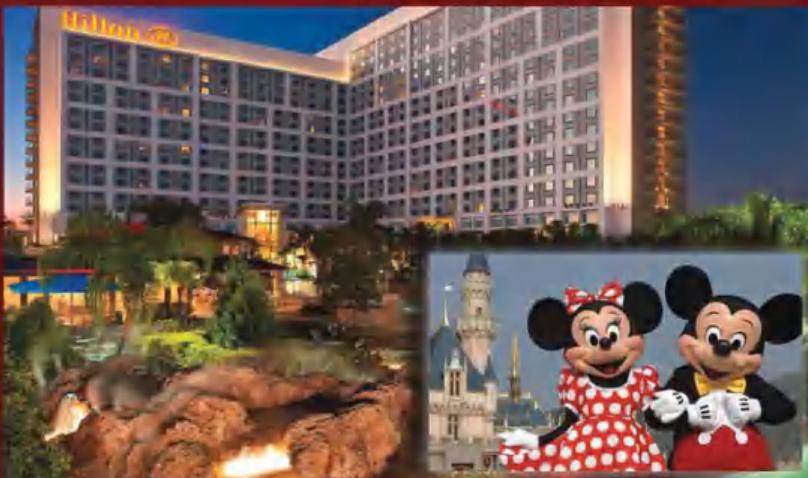
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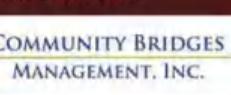
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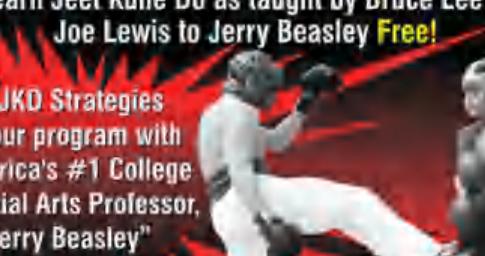


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<http://usja-judo.org/>

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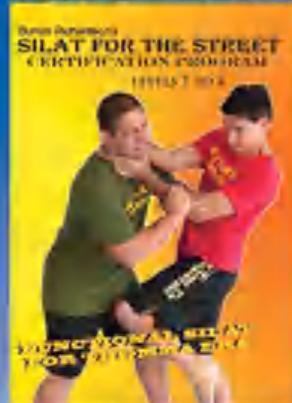
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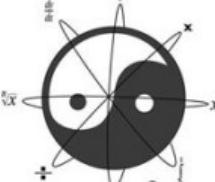
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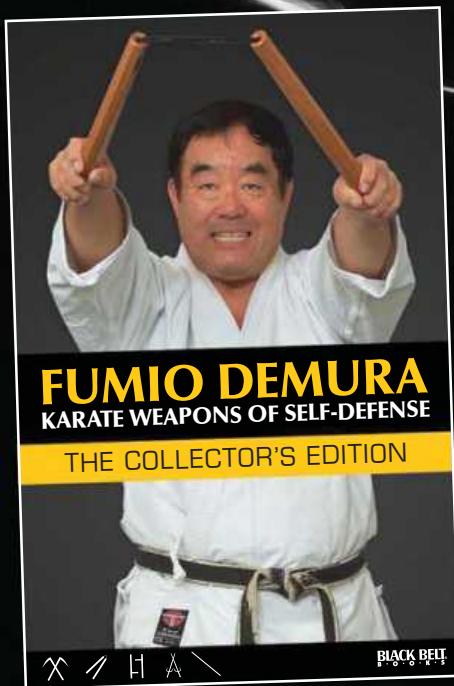
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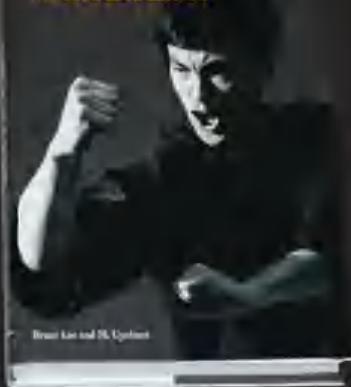
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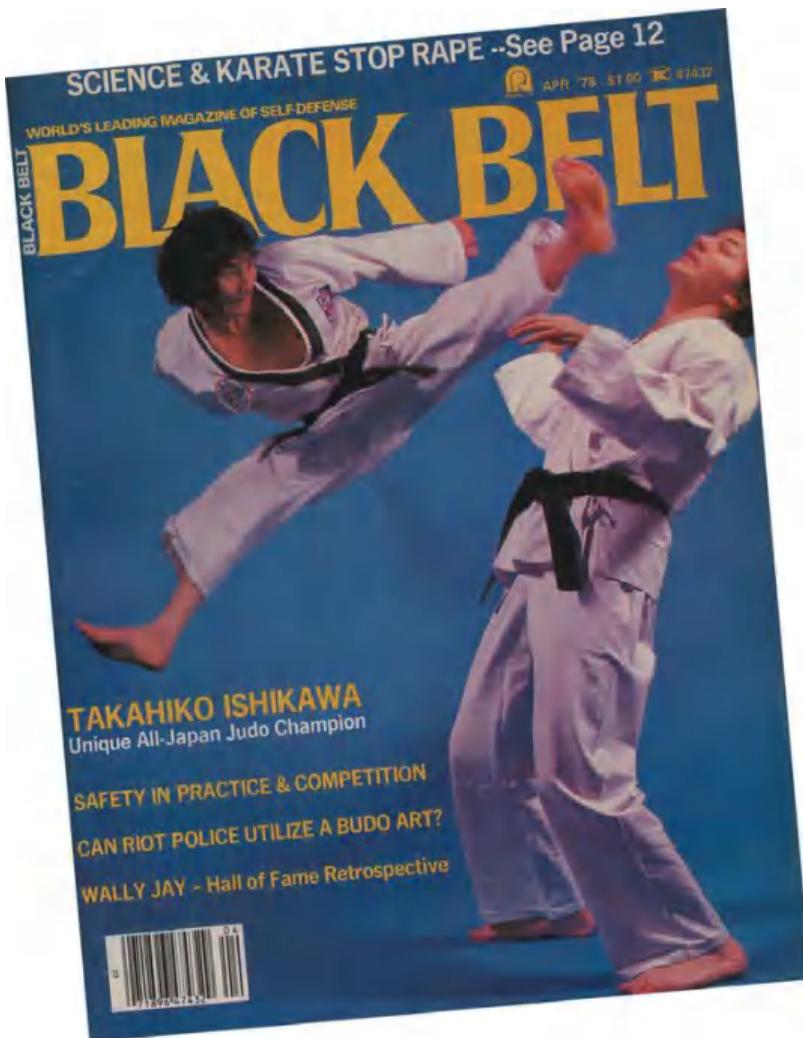
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# From The Archives

Vol. 16, No. 4, \$1

The 172nd issue of *Black Belt* was dated April 1978. It was 76 pages long and featured *taekwondo* authority Si Young Jo on the cover.

- In 1956 a letter is delivered to the Kodokan in Tokyo, asking for the "strongest, most skillful judo fighter in all Japan" to be sent to the domicile of the writer. All expenses will be paid, including airfare and a weekly allowance for the duration of the proposed six-month assignment. The Kodokan president gives it some thought, then tells Takahiko Ishikawa to pack his bags. Thus Cuba gets its first official judo teacher.
- In the Letters department, readers spar over the notion that Chuck Norris will become the next Bruce Lee.
- Now-defunct Dolan's Sports runs a full-page ad for *nunchaku* and *nunchaku* parts. Our favorite: a *nunchaku* key chain that sells for \$1.49.
- In a bout with Burnis White, Bill Wallace battles to retain his middleweight karate title. "My kicks were sluggish," Wallace says afterward. "I'm used to fighting on regular boxing mats, which are boards covered by canvas. But the mats here were soft, and most of the kicks were losing something because I wasn't able to get the grip." Nevertheless, Wallace wins a unanimous decision.
- The Southern California Collegiate Judo Conference under Hayward Nishioka petitions California to make judo a state-supported athletic event.
- *Taekwondo* stylist Pugill Gwon scores a role in *Code Name: Blood Fire* and prepares to negotiate for *The Ghost of Karate*, a film that's supposed to be his biopic.

- With help from Bow Sim Mark, *Black Belt* introduces the Western world to *wushu*, the term China uses to refer to its martial arts. "Kung fu," we're told, is a colloquialism.
- A new program has Tokyo police officers learning *budo* with a focus on *aikido*.
- In recognition of their increasing value, back issues of *Black Belt* are being sold for \$2 each — twice the current cover price.
- The magazine receives a letter from Mas Oyama. He wants to set the record straight on Joko Ninomiya, whom *Black Belt* erroneously identified as a Japan Karate Association instructor. Ninomiya is actually a *kyokushin* instructor, Oyama says.
- "In the old way of *jujitsu*, you either push or pull," says Wally Jay, a 1969 *Black Belt* Hall of Fame inductee. "The small circle is faster and more effective. In a large circle, you have too much area to escape. The whole idea is to go along the line the person you are fighting is going. It is a natural progression."
- In the thank-you-Captain-Obvious department, the following tidbit appears in a sidebar to a women's self-defense story: "When a man is sexually aroused, his body hormones may be used against him by grabbing, squeezing or slapping the testicles." Pretty certain those techniques work at other times, too. ☕

(Note: Back issues are not for sale.)

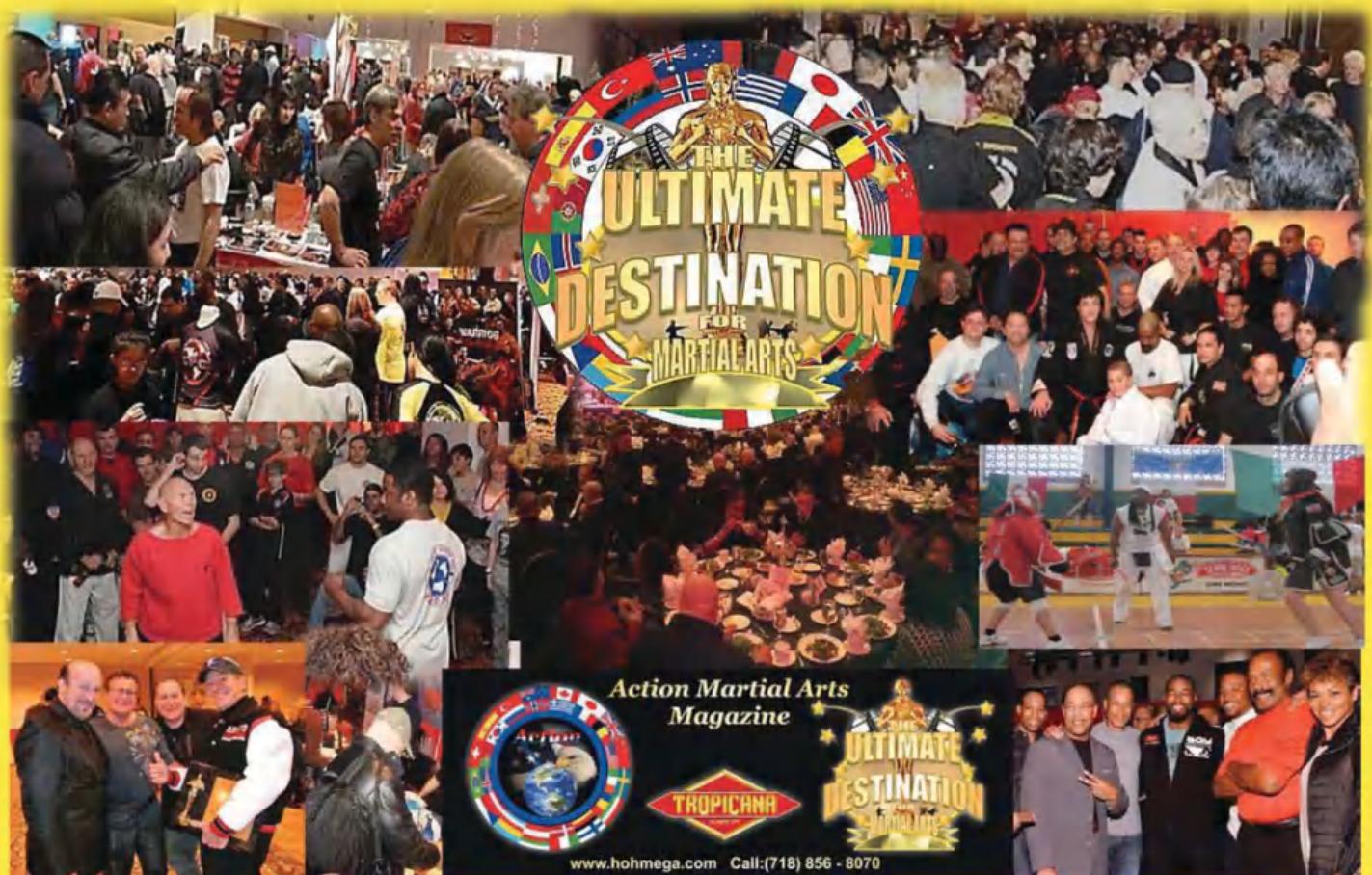
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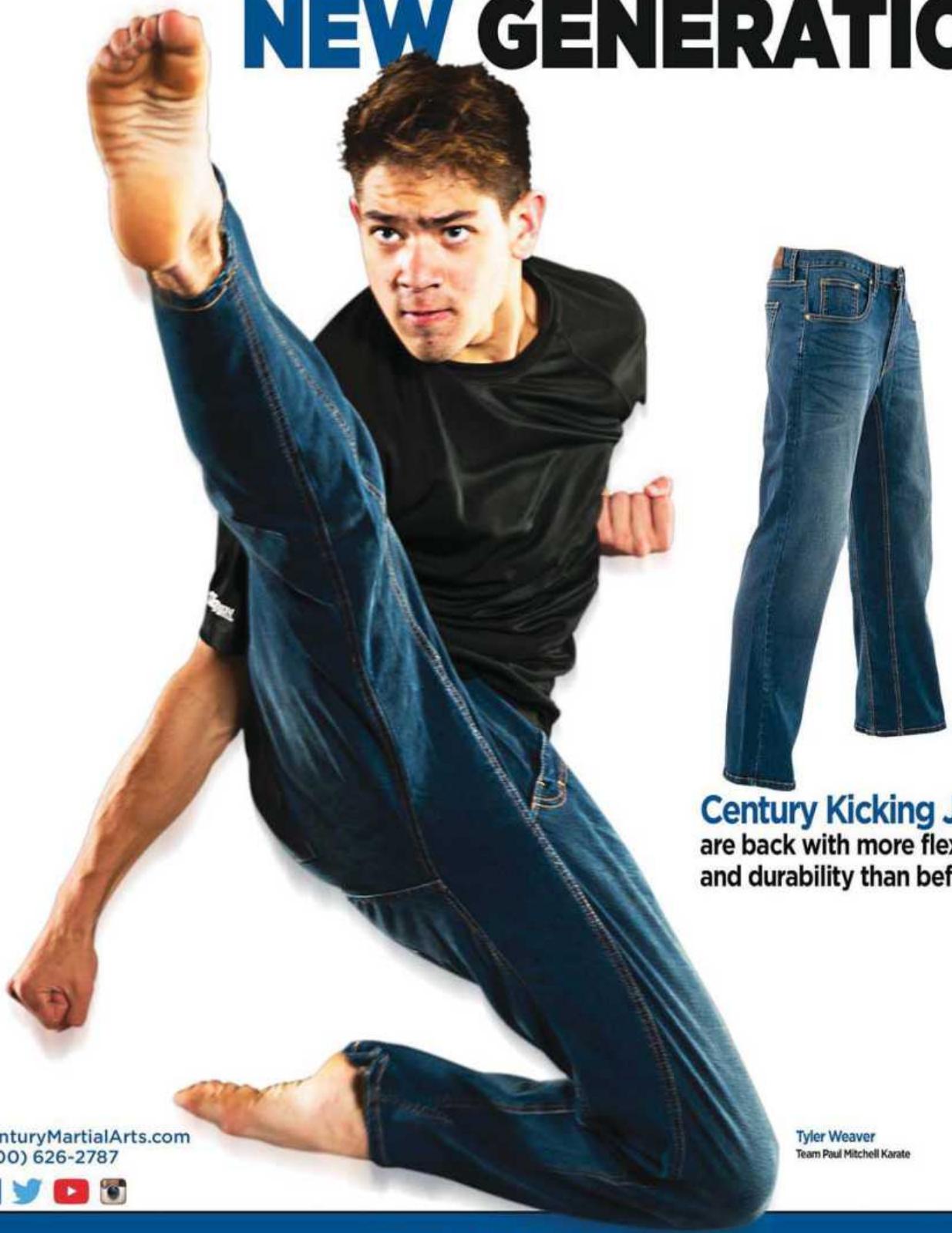
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